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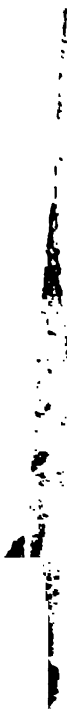


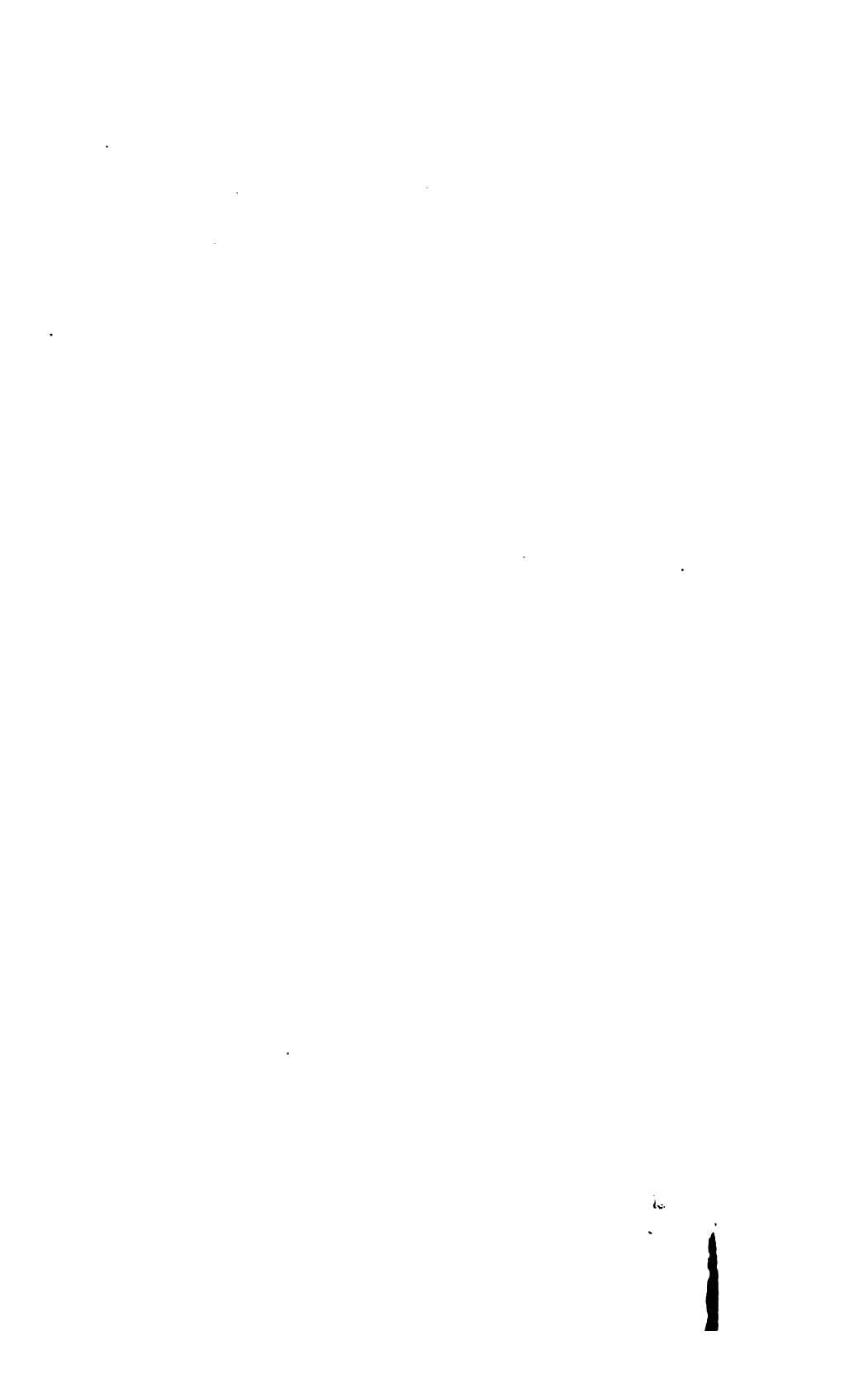




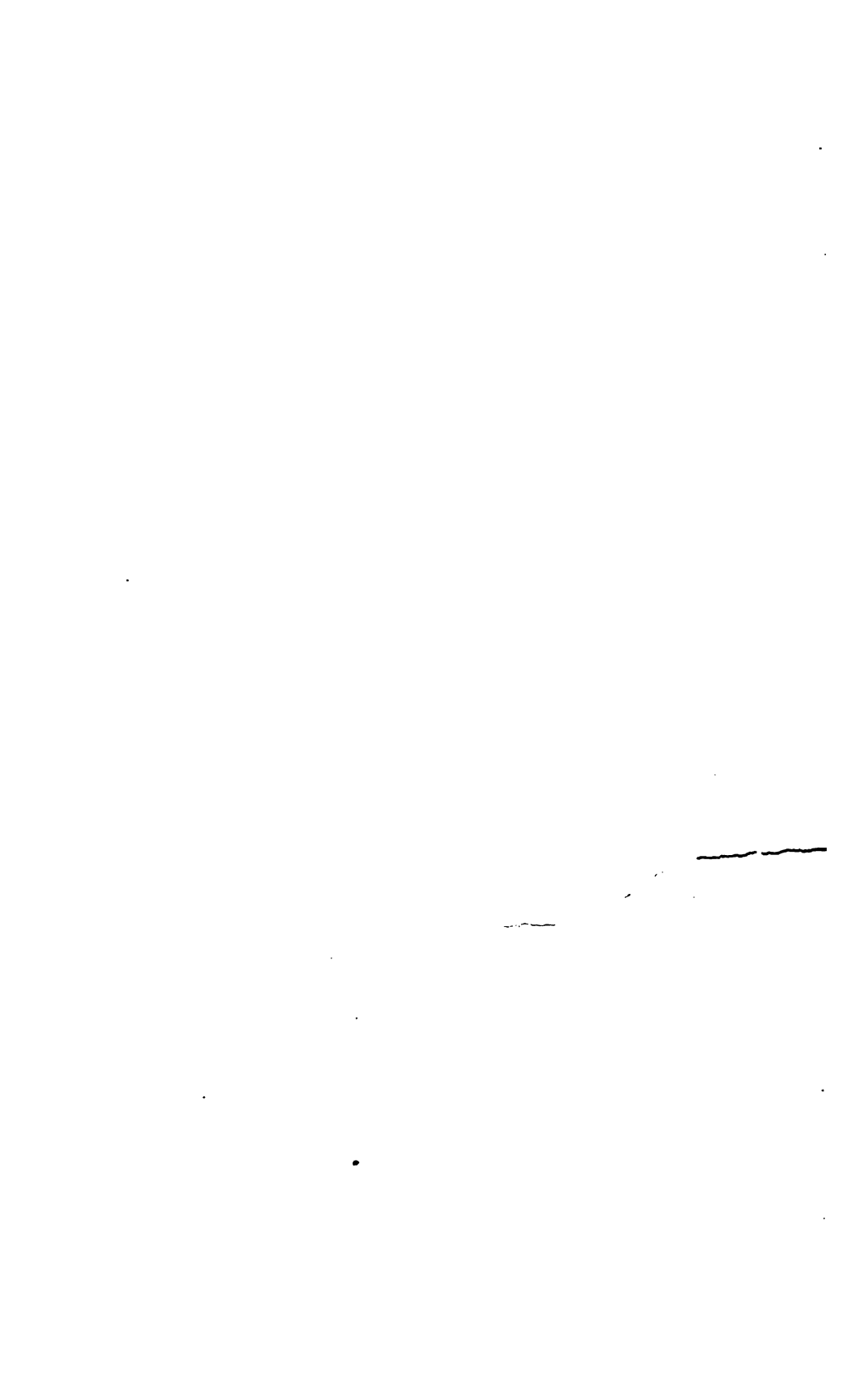
**LETTERS OF GEORGE SAND.**













GEORGE SAND at the age of 28.

From a painting by Eugène Delacroix.

LETTERS  
OF  
GEORGE SAND.

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY  
RAPHAËL LEDOS DE BEAUFORT.

WITH  
*PREFACE AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH BY THE TRANSLATOR.*

**Illustrated with Six Portraits of George Sand**  
**AT VARIOUS PERIODS OF HER LIFE.**

**In Three Volumes.**

VOL. I.

LONDON:  
WARD AND DOWNEY,  
12, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.  
1886.

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CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS,  
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## PREFACE.

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A FULL knowledge of the very deep interest felt in this country in regard to French literature, more especially the works of leading writers, induces the belief that the British reading public would favourably receive a translation of the most important letters of the late George Sand.

Those letters, it is certain, will greatly modify the views hitherto held by many people in this country respecting the scope of the genius of their author, who, in England, is still regarded chiefly as a novelist. They will also throw new light upon her moral and religious ideas. Further, they will be found to contain many somewhat interesting details, as yet unpublished in this country, and relating to the chief social, political, and literary events—European and French, chiefly the latter—which occurred during the period embracing the fall of Charles X., the Monarchy of July, the rise of Saint-Simonism and the various other schools of Socialism :

those of Cabet, Blanqui, Proudhon, Leroux, Fourier, Lamennais, and others; the flight of Louis Philippe, the proclamation of the Second Republic, the insurrection of Poland, the expedition to Rome, the *Coup d'état*, the proclamation of the Empire, the Crimean war, the struggle for Italian unity, the war of 1866, the disasters of the Franco-Prussian war, the subsequent outbreak of the Commune, etc., etc.

The letters, it will be observed, are preceded by a biographical sketch, the facts contained in which are derived from unquestionably authentic sources. This will, it is hoped, enable the reader better to understand the various allusions made in the letters to the other literary productions of the author and to her domestic affairs. A few notes have also been added, for the convenience of those who may not have any extensive knowledge of the author's works and of the events referred to in her letters.

Nearly all the important works of George Sand have been translated into English. Of these, but a few novels have appeared in this country. In the United States, a far larger proportion of her writings has been so published. This difference of appreciation of the author is probably apparent only, and due to the non-existence of any copyright convention between France and the United States. However, in spite of the heavy



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costs involved in translation and the purchase of copyright, her works have secured publication in all the principal modern languages.

The work of translation and revision has been greatly facilitated by the collaboration of Mr. P. Varnals, whose assistance in his literary labours the translator has had previous occasion \* to recognise.

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\* In revising the MS. and proofs of *The Germans*, translated from the French of Father Didon.

LONDON, *January*, 1886.



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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

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AMANTINE LUCILE AURORE DUDEVANT, *née* DUPIN, known in literature under the pseudonym of GEORGE SAND, was born in Paris on the 5th July, 1804, the year of the coronation of the first Napoléon as Emperor (16 Messidor, year XII., the last of the Republic).

Her father, Maurice Dupin de Francueil, was the son of M. Dupin de Francueil, a gentleman belonging to a family of noble but not exalted rank, and holding the position of Receiver-General for the Duchy of Albret.

M. Dupin de Francueil lived at the castle of Châteauroux, on the banks of the Indre, where, on the 13th of January, 1778, a son (Maurice) was borne to him by his second wife, Marie Aurore de Saxe, a natural daughter of Maurice, Count of Saxony, Duke of Courland and Marshal-General of France; the last-named title, previously held only by Turenne and Villars, together with a vast estate and a yearly pension of 50,000 *livres*, being bestowed by Louis XV. as a mark of his gratitude to the hero of Fontenoy.

Marie Aurore de Saxe had been previously married to the Count of Horn, a natural son of Louis XV., and Lieutenant-Governor of Schelestadt, in the province of Alsace, who died at a very advanced age only three months after the marriage.

Maurice de Saxe was a natural son of Augustus II., Elector of Saxony by the Countess of Königsmark, considered to be one of the gréatest beauties of the time, and was related to the royal family of France through the marriage of his sister to the Dauphin, the father of Louis XVI.

The foregoing will enable the reader to perceive the real, though illegitimate affiliation, which George Sand herself points out as existing between her family and the Bourbons.

Whilst serving in Italy as an officer in the French army, Maurice Dupin de Francueil met with Antoinette Victoria Sophie DELABORDE, whose devotion to him during a long and dangerous illness won his affection, and despite the fact of her having previously been the mother of two illegitimate children by different fathers, brought about a *liaison*, subsequently consecrated by marriage, and which resulted in the birth of the subject of the present sketch.

Contrary to the general rule of French marriages, the bridegroom was the younger of the parties, being but twenty-six, whilst his bride had reached thirty.

As George Sand, in her *Histoire de ma Vie*, herself observes, her mother was but a poor waif of the Paris streets, the daughter of Antoine Delaborde, a *maitre-paulmier* and

*maitre-oiselier*—that is, a bird-fancier—who carried on business on the Quai aux Oiseaux, and had previously kept a small dram-shop and billiard-room, somewhere in Paris.

The godfather of Antoinette Delaborde was a bird-fancier named Barra, a name that might still have been seen on the Boulevard du Temple, in 1847, over a shop crowded with cages of all sizes, where, as says George Sand, “might always be heard the joyous strains of a host of feathered songsters, regarded by me as so many sponsors and mysterious patron-saints, between whom and myself I have always fancied that there existed a special affinity.”

Three years after his marriage with the Countess of Horn, M. Dupin de Francueil died. The guardianship of Maurice Dupin de Francueil thus devolved upon his mother, the countess, to whom his *liaison* with Antoinette Delaborde appeared in the light of a great grievance.

These feelings on the part of his mother produced no effect upon Maurice, who, on the 5th of June, 1804, had actually married his mistress, having, in the absence of consent on the part of the countess, provided himself with a forged certificate of parental authorisation.

The circumstances attending the birth of Maurice Dupin's celebrated daughter were somewhat peculiar. M. Dupin himself was in Paris, on leave of absence from service at Boulogne, where Napoléon had collected 100,000 men, in view of a descent upon the shores of this country. At a dancing party, where Madame Dupin was taking part in a quadrille, enlivened by the strains of her husband's violin, she was

suddenly compelled to withdraw, being seized with the pains of childbirth. A few minutes later Aurore Dupin saw the light.

When but four years of age, Aurore lost her father, who was killed by a fall from his horse when returning home late at night from a visit to some friends. At the time of his death, M. Maurice Dupin held the rank of captain in the cavalry, and was on the point of attaining the object of his ambition—appointment as an officer in the imperial body-guard.

Upon the death of Aurore's father, Madame Dupin quitted Paris for Nohant, near La Châtre, at the request of her mother-in-law, whose feelings, in regard to what she had formerly resented as a *mésalliance* on the part of her son, had been greatly modified by the terrible blow which the sad event had inflicted upon her.

All the affection hitherto bestowed by the countess upon her son was now centred in her grand-daughter.

Until reaching the age of fourteen, Aurore was brought up under the immediate care of her grandmother, at the *château* at Nohant. Her education was in accordance with the principles laid down in the *Émile* of Jean Jacques Rousseau, of whom the aged countess, a most intelligent and accomplished woman, was an enthusiastic admirer, and who, it may be mentioned, had at one time acted as secretary to her second husband.

In the work previously mentioned, *Histoire de ma Vie*, our heroine, speaking of her early years, says: "While I was yet

very young, my mother commenced the cultivation of my intellectual faculties; my mind was neither particularly sluggish nor particularly active; left to itself it might have developed but slowly. I was rather backward in talking, but having once begun to speak I learned words very rapidly, and, when but four years old, I could read fluently. I was brought up with my cousin Clotilde. Our respective mothers taught us our prayers, and I recollect that I used to repeat mine by heart without a mistake, and also without having any idea of their meaning, except as regards the following words, which we were made to repeat when our little heads were laid upon the same pillow: '*Mon Dieu, je vous donne mon cœur!*' (My God, I give my heart to thee!) I do not know why I understood those words better than the rest, for they are highly metaphysical; but certainly I did understand them, and it was the only part of my prayers that conveyed to my mind any idea either of God or myself. ) As for the *Pater*, the *Credo*, and the *Ave Maria*, all of which I knew very well in French, with the exception of '*Donnez-nous notre pain de chaque jour*' (give us our daily bread), I might as well have repeated them like a parrot, in Latin; they could not have been more unintelligible to me.

"We were also taught La Fontaine's fables, and I knew nearly all of them; but they, too, were a closed book to me. The learning and repeating of them used to tire me so much, that I was fifteen or sixteen years of age before I perceived their beauty.

"It was formerly the custom to fill the minds of children

with a heap of intellectual treasures far beyond their power of appreciation. I certainly do not find fault at their having some little trouble imposed upon them. In relieving the youthful mind of all such laborious exercise, as advocated by him in his *Émile*, Rousseau runs the risk of letting the brain of his pupil grow so dull as to become incapable of learning that which the master reserves for a more mature age. It is right to accustom children, at as early an age as possible, to a moderate but daily exercise of their mental faculties. But it is too much the fashion to prematurely place before them matters too subtle for their comprehension. No literature exists that is really suitable for little children. All the pretty verses written specially for their reading are too affected, and abound in terms which form no part of their vocabulary. Nursery rhymes are about the only productions that really appeal to their childish imagination.

\* \* \* \* \*

“My mother used to sing to me a rhyme on Christmas Eve; but as that only occurred once a year, I do not recollect it. What I have not forgotten is the absolute belief which I had in the descent down the chimney of Old Father Christmas, a good old man with a snowy beard, who, during the night, as the clock struck twelve, was to come and place in my little shoe a present which I should find upon awaking. Twelve o’clock at night! that mysterious hour unknown to children, and which is represented to them as the impossible limit to which they can keep awake! What incredible efforts did I not make to resist my tendency to sleep before



the appearance of the little old man! I felt anxious yet afraid to see him! But I could never keep awake long enough, and the following morning my first anxiety was to go and examine my shoe in the fireplace. What emotion did I not feel at sight of the white paper parcel! for Father Christmas was extremely clean in his ways, and never failed to carefully wrap up his offering. I used to jump out of bed and run barefooted to seize my treasure. It was never a very magnificent affair, for we were not wealthy! It used to be a little cake, an orange, or simply a nice rosy apple. But, nevertheless, it seemed so precious to me that I scarcely dared to eat it. There, again, imagination played its part, for imagination fills a child's whole existence.

"I do not at all approve of Rousseau's wish to suppress the marvellous under the pretence that it is mere deception. Reasoning and incredulity come quite soon enough and of themselves. I quite remember the first year when doubts occurred to me as to the actual existence of Father Christmas. I was then five or six years old, and it then seemed to me that it must have been my mother who placed the biscuit in my shoe. It therefore appeared to me not so fine or so good as before, and I experienced a kind of regret at being no longer able to believe in the little man with the snowy beard. My son believed in it longer than I had. Boys are more simple than girls. Like myself, he used to make great efforts to keep awake until midnight. Like me, he failed to do so, and, like me, used to find in the morning the cake that had been miraculously kneaded in the kitchen in Paradise;

but, in his case also, the first year in which doubts were excited was the last of the old man's visit."

Deschartres, an ecclesiastic, who, prior to the Revolution, had entered the service of M. Dupin de Francueil as secretary, and had afterwards acted as tutor to his son Maurice, instructed Aurore in grammar, her grandmother teaching her music. Sacred history also formed part of her education, which, however, was not associated with instruction in the tenets of any religion. As regards acceptance or rejection of the miraculous, the mind of the pupil was left entirely free.

What may be termed the religious ideas of our heroine were thus formed under the somewhat contrary influences of an enlightened and free-thinking grandmother, imbued with the principles of Voltaire and Rousseau, and of a simple and illiterate mother who, though in no way bigoted, was yet profoundly religious.

The questions of religion and religious practices were frequently discussed by the countess and Madame Dupin. The latter, when rallied by her mother-in-law upon her non-compliance with the requirements of her Church in regard specially to confession, used to reply: "I have my own religion. Of what is prescribed I accept and reject as I think proper. I cannot bear priests; most of them are but hypocrites, and I shall never entrust them with thoughts which they could not rightly appreciate. I believe that I do no harm, but if I do it is unpremeditated. It may be that I shall never rid myself of my defects; that cannot be helped. But I love God with a

sincere heart ; I believe He is too good to punish us in a future life. We are punished enough for our faults in this world. Yet I greatly fear death, because I am afraid to appear before God, although I have full trust in Him, and feel certain of never having intentionally offended against Him."

The Countess of Horn held in strong detestation, not only those whose religion savoured of bigotry, but the whole system of Catholicism. She called herself a deist, and disdainfully rejected all religious dogmas. Far from being an atheist, she believed in that sort of natural religion which was much extolled, but ill defined, by the philosophers of the eighteenth century. She held Jesus Christ in great veneration, and admired the gospel as containing excellent philosophy ; but deplored the fact of truth having been always surrounded by a fabulation more or less ridiculous.

Far more attractive to Aurore than the cold and critical scepticism of her grandmother, was her mother's simple and earnest faith ; for Madame Dupin's religion had in it something of the poetical, and that was precisely what suited the mind of her daughter, whose ardent imagination passionately thirsted for the marvellous, and would have been well satisfied with belief had not the frequent cold, matter-of-fact appeals made to her reason by the countess somewhat impeded the development of the faith which her mother sought to foster.

A similar comparison existed in the child's mind regarding the different disciplinary styles of her mother and the countess ; the angry reproaches of the former never shocking

her feelings to the same extent as her grandmother's cold and dignified rebuke.

Thanks to the course of instruction provided for her, Aurore, when seven or eight years old, was fairly conversant with her native language. This progress was not without its disadvantages, for the study of grammar was now laid aside in favour of other subjects. Though a special feature was made of composition, and great attention devoted to the formation of her style, the attention of the pupil was only incidentally directed to the errors made by her in grammar, whilst at the same time her head was crammed with Latin, Greek, prosody, botany, whose barbarous terms and complex laws her memory was unable to retain, and arithmetic, for which she always displayed remarkable incapacity.

This cramming process produced its inevitable results—superficial knowledge and confused ideas of the numerous subjects with which the brain was burdened.

Madame Dupin viewed with disfavour the system adopted, often remarking: "What is the use of all that twaddle!"

It seems that the same latitude that was allowed to Aurore in religious matters was permitted in her course of reading, for, as we learn from the perusal of her *Lettres d'un Voyageur*, her imagination was nourished by Madame de Staël's *Corinne*, the works of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, the *Iliad*, Millevoye's poems, and Chateaubriand's *Atala*.

These works, it might be supposed, would have sufficiently taxed the brain of a child, but Aurore had an insatiable craving for knowledge. Lavater's system of physiognomy, by

no means the kind of work likely to invite a youthful mind, was eagerly devoured by her; Rousseau's *Confessions*, his *Nouvelle Héloïse*, his *Émile*, were all treated in the same fashion.

The dignified and rather frigid character of the countess inspired her grand-daughter with feelings of affection tempered with respect and almost veneration, whereas the simple and natural ways of Madame Dupin developed a boundless and profound love, which increased as years went by.

As is the way with elderly people, the aged lady who, since the death of her beloved son, had directed all her powers of affection towards her Aurore, jealously watched the progress of her grand-daughter's love for Madame Dupin. It seemed to her that she ought to possess the child's undivided love. These feelings often led to scenes between the countess and her daughter-in-law, and finally so obsessed the old lady that, notwithstanding her sound and clear judgment in all other respects, she allowed them to so completely master her as to become a fixed idea.

After a scene of unusual violence, it was decided that Madame Dupin should leave Nohant and retire to Paris, there to live on the income left to her by her deceased husband. Aurore was to remain under the entire and immediate care of her grandmother, and to see her mother only at rare intervals. On learning this the child could not repress her tears, her grief was intense; she would not hear of being separated from her mother. The latter, having exhausted all the arguments within the comprehension of a child, eventually pointed out

the advantages likely to accrue from staying with a wealthy parent who adored and had no other heir but her. She further placed before her daughter's eyes the contrast between the meagre living which the modest income of her mother could provide for her if persisting in the resolution to follow her to Paris, and the rather sumptuous life led at the château of Nohant. The child gave way, though in her mind she could not comprehend how a loving daughter could prefer wealth and comfort to a more humble life in the society of the dearest object of her affection.

Aurore's mother had been gone some time, and the means devised by the countess to conquer the whole heart of her grand-daughter showing, as yet, no signs of having produced the result so eagerly expected, she resorted to a most imprudent device for a lady so generally discreet. Having in vain appealed to the gratitude of Aurore, she sought to destroy in her the candid and spontaneous love she felt for her mother, by inveighing against Madame Dupin, and finally representing to the child how ignorant her mother was, how vulgar her relations, and how unfit an association for a young girl destined some day to become a wealthy lady, occupying some rank in society. Aurore, who, as previously remarked, had never ceased to love her grandmother, though less intensely than her mother, was quite startled. Although feeling the truth of some of the countess' remarks, her ardent soul could not understand her grandparent's thus speaking to her about her dear mother. Henceforth she grew colder towards the old lady. She lost all her former taste for study, and became mopish and meditative.

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As a last resource, and despite the fact that neither her own views nor those of Madame Dupin countenanced a religious education, the Countess of Horn decided in 1817 to place her grand-daughter in a convent, there to finish her education. Aurore was now nearly fourteen years of age. She left Nohant with her grandmother and went with her to Paris. After a few days spent in visiting her mother, M. and Madame René de Villeneuve, her father's cousins, and some other relations, it was arranged that she should enter the Couvent des Dames Anglaises in the Rue Saint-Victor, one of the most aristocratic boarding schools of Paris, where, after her first widowhood, the Countess of Horn had retired for three years.

Though she had left Nohant without almost any regret, she deeply felt the parting from her grandmother. However, the change of life and manners, life in common with others, and her new surroundings, so completely secured her attention that she soon reconciled herself to her lot, and, giving way to her irrepressible love of independence, soon became one of the *diabes* \* in her form. She thus continued for two years, scarcely ever leaving her school for a day, the countess having thought fit to deprive her of her midsummer holidays, ostensibly because of her backwardness, but, in reality, because of her wish to cause Aurore to appreciate all the more her home at Nohant and the kindness of her grandmother, when once more with her.

Meeting with special kindness on the part of a pious

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\* Insubordinate pupils in a school.

though enlightened sister at the convent, the old religious feelings of Aurore were suddenly aroused, and her apathetic indifference all at once gave way to an almost frantic devotion.

In 1820, the countess having fallen seriously ill and fearing that her end was near, summoned her beloved granddaughter, who, now better able to appreciate her duties towards the old lady, nursed her with sincere and earnest devotion until her death, which occurred shortly afterwards.

In the anxiety she felt to withhold her grand-daughter from what, in her aristocratic prejudice, she considered the baneful influence of her illiterate daughter-in-law, the Countess of Horn had thought fit to insert in her will a clause intended to deprive Madame Dupin of the guardianship of Aurore, as tutor to whom she appointed her nephew, Count René de Villeneuve.

On the opening of the will, the clause in question (and which was actually illegal) was cancelled by mutual consent, and Madame Dupin undertook, with Deschartres, the trusted adviser and friend of the countess, as *co-tuteur* (co-guardian), the duties involved by the minority of her daughter.

Aurore was now almost marriageable, and it was arranged that she should return to the convent until a suitable opportunity offered for her establishment in life.

But a short time elapsed after her return to the Dames Anglaises, when, giving way to her religious enthusiasm, she informed her mother of her intention to take the veil and to enter the community in the midst of which she had been living for nearly four years.



Madame Dupin at once communicated with her husband's friends and relations and strenuously opposed the wish of her daughter. She called her to her side and compelled her to renounce the idea.

Aurore was now sent to some friends in the country, and her speedy marriage determined upon. One day, whilst she was partaking of refreshments out-of-doors, a smart and elegant young man approached, and, saluting the friends with her, inquired as to Aurore. "She is my daughter," was the reply of the lady addressed. "She shall be my wife then," said the young officer, "for you promised to give me one of your daughters, and mademoiselle is younger than your other daughter and more suitable to one of my age."

The young man referred to above was Lieutenant Casimir Dudevant, whose corps had recently been disbanded. He was the natural son of M. Dudevant, a colonel in the French army under Napoléon Bonaparte, who, in recognition of his services, had created him a baron of the Empire. By his father, Colonel Dudevant was related to Law, the celebrated Scotch *financier*; by his mother he was of Spanish origin.

But, to return to Lieutenant Casimir, who was then but twenty-seven years of age. He happened to meet again with Aurore Dupin at the house of mutual friends, where they were both making a short stay. He discovered that he had been the object of a practical joke in being misinformed respecting Aurore, as related in a foregoing paragraph, learned the real name and parentage of Mademoiselle Dupin, and soon fell in love with her, and with due respect

very frankly disclosed his feelings to her. Aurore felt rather pleased when, having declared his love, he bluntly added: "It is not, I am aware, the rule for men to propose direct to their intended affianced brides; but I love you, mademoiselle. I cannot refrain from informing you of my feelings, and, if my appearance does not displease you too much, if, in short, you would accept me as a husband, I will inform Madame Dupin of my intentions; if, on the contrary, you reject me, it is, I consider, useless for me to trouble your mother."

The incident having been brought to the knowledge of Madame Dupin by her daughter, she did her best to induce Aurore to accept what she considered a suitable offer; it having been previously ascertained that Baron Dudevant, who had no other child but Casimir, would leave his fortune to him.

Deschartres having been called upon to render accounts of his administration of his ward's estate and fortune, it transpired that receipts amounting in the aggregate to a sum of 18,000 francs (about £750), out of a total of about 600,000 francs (£24,000), the amount of Aurore's fortune, remained unaccounted for. Poor Deschartres was dumbfounded, and could not explain so unexpected a result of his maladministration; Madame Dupin insisted upon the production of the receipts, but Aurore, suddenly moved by pity towards her old tutor, who was now proposing to sell his own petty estate, situated in some unproductive part of the Department of Landes, assured the notary that the sum for which receipts

were not forthcoming had been previously paid to her by Deschartres, and that it was owing to her own negligence that he could not produce the receipts, she never having given him any. Madame Dupin, seeing that in this her daughter was only obeying the dictates of a kind heart, challenged her to affirm on oath that what she was then saying was the truth, and threatened to cause Deschartres to be arrested as a debtor, he having acknowledged the deficit. Mademoiselle Dupin, however, renewed her declaration, and thus saved the friend of her grandmother.

Everything having been satisfactorily arranged, Mademoiselle Aurore Dupin, then seventeen years of age, became, in 1822, the wife of Casimir DUDEVANT.

The young couple went to reside on the bride's own estate at Nohant. Nothing occurred to disturb the first years of our heroine's married life. Matrimony did not certainly appear to her in the ideal light she had formed of it; but her life was calm, and her husband's affection, though not so ardent as she might have wished, appeared to her to be real. In July, 1823, she gave birth to a son—her beloved Maurice.

From that time (her husband seems to have gradually neglected her, to satisfy his tastes as a sportsman. An excellent shot, a daring horseman, an indefatigable huntsman, he often left her at two or three in the morning, to indulge in his favourite sport—hunting.

The young wife, delicate in health and ardent in her affection, deeply resented the frequent absence of her husband. She at first meekly remonstrated with M. Dudevant, who

would then stay at home for a few days, soon again to disappear. Months and years thus elapsed. When not out hunting, M. Dudevant indulged in feasting with his friends, eating enormously and drinking more (Madame Dudevant herself tells us so), and almost forsaking his wife for the pleasures of the field and the table.)

Madame Dudevant's illusions concerning married life were totally dispelled! Instead of the companion she had dreamed of, her husband proved a more fit associate for the inmates of a barrack-room than of his young, accomplished, attractive, loving, and romantic wife. The health of the latter, which at the best of times had never been very good, was now, however, rapidly declining. Under medical advice, it was decided that M. and Madame Casimir Dudevant should undertake a journey to some of the watering-places in the Pyrenees, the pure air of the mountains being expected to impart new vigour to the seemingly impoverished blood of the wife, who was herself anxiously looking forward to the change of scenery and association to modify the behaviour of her husband towards her, and to re-establish the cordial understanding of the first few months of her married life.

A few months after their departure from the château at Nohant, M. and Madame Dudevant returned from the Pyrenees. Only one of the lady's aims had been secured: her health was much improved, but her husband was still conducting himself in the same inconsiderate and cold-hearted fashion towards her. She sought to drown her grief in the preoccupation afforded her by the education of her son

Maurice, and by the maternal cares required by her daughter Solange, born in 1829.

The mutual relations between the husband and the wife were growing worse daily. They at last reached a climax when, in his fits of drunkenness, M. Casimir Dudevant went so far as to ill-treat and strike his wife, who—as related in two letters written by her, on the 3rd and on the 8th December, 1830, to M. Jules Boucoiran, the tutor of her son Maurice—having discovered a letter written by her husband and containing the most odious imputations upon her, finally made up her mind to leave him; a resolution which she carried into effect in January, 1831. Her intention was to reside one half the year at Nohant and the other at Paris, her husband having engaged to allow her an income of a thousand *écus* a year (about £120). In 1832, she took her daughter with her to Paris. A year later, her son Maurice was sent to college.

Accustomed to luxury, Madame Dudevant found it impossible to live and to gratify her tastes with the income allotted to her. Too proud to ask of her husband, she collected all her energy, and thought of turning to account her knowledge of English (which she had learned at the convent where she was educated, the majority of the nuns there being British subjects), and tried her hand at translating, but without success. She in turn sought for occupation in dressmaking and millinery, but could scarcely earn *five pence* (*sic* in *Histoire de ma Vie*) a day, by working sixteen and even eighteen hours daily. Having learned drawing and painting, with which, when at Nohant, she occupied her leisure hours,

she contrived to find employment in which her knowledge could be utilised. A jeweller to whom she had been introduced, and who also dealt in works of art and fancy articles, proposed to her that she should decorate articles of *tabletterie* which, when finished, he would exhibit for sale in his window. The offer was accepted; but the materials were expensive, and although a small box, decorated with flowers by Madame Dudevant, realised a respectable sum—nearly five pounds—she thought she could find an occupation more profitable and better suited to her aptitudes.

A year previous to her rupture with her husband, Madame Dudevant had made, at Nohant, the acquaintance of a young man of generous impulses and noble aspirations, and her soul and his had been merged in mutual communion of ideas. That young man, Jules Sandeau, the future *Academician* and author of the delightful comedy entitled *Mademoiselle de la Seiglière*, was then in Paris studying law.

Having met Madame Dudevant, and she having informed him of the precarious state of her budget, he strongly advised her to embrace the career of literature. After much persuasion, it was arranged that the two young friends should write in collaboration an article\* for the *Figaro*, the director of which paper was M. Henri de Latouche, who, like themselves, belonged to Berry, and who, displaying the greatest interest in them, accepted their article and encouraged them to write others, which shortly afterwards appeared in the *Figaro*, and greatly puzzled the Paris press.

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\* *La Prima Donna.*

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Some time afterwards (the two young friends wrote a novel entitled, *Rose et Blanche, ou la Comédienne et la Religieuse*,\* which they sold for 400 francs to a dealer in old books, to whom M. de Latouche had introduced the young authors.

But it was indispensable that the name of the author should be appended to the work. Madame Dudevant could not put her name to it for fear of a scandal; as for Sandeau, he was afraid of incurring the reproaches of his family, which objected to his pursuing a literary career.

The name Sandeau was curtailed, and *Rose et Blanche* appeared under the signature of *Jules Sand*.

[Then it was that, as a matter of economy and in order the more easily to secure admission to places from which women are generally excluded, Madame Dudevant, acting upon the suggestion of Madame Dupin, her mother, who used to resort to such means of disguise when travelling about with M. Maurice Dupin, began to wear male attire.]

Shortly before the departure of Madame Dudevant for Nohant, where she was about to spend three months, it was arranged between herself and Sandeau that they should each contribute a portion of a novel, whose title was to be *Indiana*.

On her return to Paris our heroine called upon Sandeau, in order to submit to him what she had done, and found that he had not yet written a single line of his allotted share of the work.

He began to read the work of his collaborator, but had not

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\* *Rose and Blanche, or the Actress and the Nun.*

proceeded beyond a few lines when he gave vent to enthusiastic expressions.

"You have written a masterpiece!"

"So much the better; let us go off at once to the publisher's."

"Wait a moment; you wrote that work alone—you alone must sign it."

"Never! we will continue to sign *Jules Sand*."

"Not at all," replied Sandeau; "I am too honest to rob you of your glory. My conscience would never fail to reproach me with such an action."

The young man was firm in his decision; and, in spite of the protests of M. de Latouche, declined to alter it.

At last an idea struck the director of the *Figaro*. "You wrote *Rose et Blanche*, and gave the name of its author as *Jules Sand*; Sand is, therefore, your common property. Madame needs only to select another christian-name. Now, madame, to-day is St. George's day. Call yourself *George Sand*, and the difficulty is solved!" Madame Dudevant assented, and thus assumed a name upon which her genius conferred more imperishable titles of nobility than had been bestowed upon her either by birth or marriage.) She will henceforth be known to us under the name of *George Sand*.

*Indiana* was sold for 600 francs, and proved a marvellous success.

Shortly after the publication of *Indiana*, the services of George Sand were retained by the *Revue de Paris* and the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

Following *Indiana* came *Valentine*, *Lélia*, *Jacques*, *André*,



*Leone Levi, Simon, Mauprat, La dernière Aldini, Lavinia, Metella*, and some others, all of which may be considered as belonging to her earliest style. These works, containing as they did eloquent and powerful attacks upon the institution of marriage, were denounced as scandalous, and their author accused of holding subversive ideas. The critics were divided, and their division resulted in several duels between the adversaries and the partisans of George Sand.

In 1834, she made a journey to Italy with Alfred de Musset, who then acted as her private secretary.

On her return, and in the period between 1835 to 1837, in addition to some of the masterpieces referred to above, she wrote *The Private Secretary, La Marquise, Les Maîtres Mosaïstes, Pauline*, etc. She also travelled through Spain with Chopin, and in *Un Hiver à Majorque* gave the impressions of her journey.

*Lélia* was, so to speak, the reflection of the various emotions, anxieties, and deceptions which she had experienced in her intercourse with Alfred de Musset, with whom she had visited Venice, and who seems to have left a deep and lasting impression upon her mind. The diverse incidents of that journey, variously related, are the subject of a certain number of George Sand's works published in 1834: *Le Secrétaire intime* and *Les Lettres d'un Voyageur*. In 1859, she again refers to that, to her, eventful journey, in *Elle et Lui*.

The growing reputation of George Sand had gathered round her a large host of friends, foremost among whom were the leading men of the day, and the various leaders of the divers schools which were contending with one another

for the honour of leading the social world in the path of progress. Each of them, so to speak, found in the author of *Indiana* a docile disciple, easily impressible with all ideas and theories, and admirably gifted to become the popular exponent of humanitarian and Socialist doctrines by clothing them with the poetic charm of her elegant style and imagination.

Then, for a moment, her talent ceased to be personal and original; she, as it were, only wrote under the dictation of other people, borrowing her philosophical ideas from Lamennais, her Republicanism from Michel de Bourges, and her Socialist tendencies from Pierre Leroux and Jean Reynaud.

*Horace, Spiridion, Le Meunier d'Angibault, Le Compagnon du Tour de France, Jeanne, La Comtesse de Rudolstadt, L'Orco, Le Pêché de M. Antoine, Consuelo*, etc., all belong to 1839, the writer's second phase.

George Sand now turned her attention to the drama. Her first efforts were not successful. *Cosima*, produced in 1840, before a public long accustomed to all sorts of scenic extravagancies, to entangled incidents culminating in impossible *dénouements*, was coolly received. It lacked effective situations and startling incidents; it was, in fact, too little *sensational*. In 1848, a new play, *Le Roi attend*, did not meet with any greater degree of favour. But *François le Champi, Olaudie, Le Pressoir*, etc., soon followed, gaining the approbation of the public, and proving the inexhaustible fecundity of the genius which had given life to *Indiana, Valentine, Lélia, Jacques*, all those grand delineations of human nature, to which exception may perhaps be taken, though they can never fail to secure admiration.

In 1848, George Sand took an active part in politics, associating her efforts with those of advanced Republicans. She wrote two *Lettres au Peuple*, the preface to the *Bulletins de la République*, contributed articles to the *Revue Indépendante*, and even founded a newspaper, *La Cause du Peuple*. In 1849, she wrote in collaboration with Barbès and Sobrier in the *Commune de Paris*, and contributed a preface to the serial, *Conteurs Ouvriers*.

In 1850, George Sand translated into French one of Mazzini's chief works, *Royalty and Republicanism in Italy*.

When that period of popular effervescence had vanished, she returned to the writing of dramas and novels, and, once more transforming her style, successively published *Les Maîtres Sonneurs*, *L'Homme de Neige*, *Pierre qui Roule*, *Jean de la Roche*, *Mademoiselle de la Quintinie*, *Le Marquis de Villemer*, etc. The two latter, in which the clerical party and the nobility were respectively attacked, put the seal to her reputation as a playwright.

Besides the works quoted above, George Sand wrote *Le Lys du Japon* (1866), a one-act comedy; *Malgré tout* (1870); *L'Autre*, a four-act comedy; *Le beau Laurence* (1870); *Francia, un bienfait n'est jamais perdu* (1872); *Nanon* (1872); *Contes d'une Grand'mère*, *Le Château de Pictordu* (1873); *Journal d'un Voyageur pendant le Siège*; *Impressions et Souvenirs* (1873); *Ma Sœur Jeanne* (1874); *La Laitière et le Pot au lait* (1875); *Les deux Frères* (1875); *Flamarande* (1876); the sequel to the *Contes d'une Grand'mère*, *Le Chêne Parlant*, *La Tour de Percemont*, *Marianne* (1876); *Dernières Pages*,

*Légendes Rustiques, Fanchette, Nouvelles Lettres d'un Voyageur* (1877).

Her last production was an article on the *Dialogues philosophiques* of M. Renan, and appeared in the *Temps* of June 6th, 1876.

In October, 1835, George Sand having obtained a judicial separation from her husband, the latter appealed against the decision, which however, in August, 1836, was confirmed by the royal court at Bourges.

According to the final judgment, George Sand recovered the full possession of her ancestral estate and fortune, upon agreeing to pay her husband a yearly income of 3,800 francs, in addition to his own remaining income of 1,200 francs. The guardianship of her daughter Solange was confided to her; and it was arranged that her son Maurice, who had been previously sent to the Collège Henri IV., a Government educational establishment at Paris, should spend one month of his midsummer holidays with his father and the other with his mother.

In May, 1847, George Sand's daughter became the wife of M. Clésinger, a talented French sculptor, from whom she eventually separated.

In 1863, Maurice Dudevant, known to the artistic and literary world under his mother's pseudonym of *Sand*, married Lina, the daughter of Signor Calamatta, a distinguished Italian artist.

Her constitution being generally weak, the health of George Sand was considerably shattered, in 1860, by an attack of

typhus fever. From that time, the illustrious writer became subject to frequent periods of indisposition, the attacks of which increased in gravity as she advanced in age. The fear of distressing her children and grandchildren, with whom she lived at Nohant, induced her to conceal the worst of her sufferings. In order to avoid very frequent visits from the doctor, she contrived to attend personally to herself. Only when her sufferings were too intense or too obvious was a practitioner called to the château; in most cases without her previous knowledge, or against her wish.

On the 31st of May, 1876, she was obliged to keep her bed. In the hope of saving her life, the doctors decided upon performing an operation, which, however, proved fatal. Inflammation set in, and, owing to the violence of her pains, she at last perceived that her end was fast approaching. A few hours before death, her sufferings abated. She died on the 8th of June, 1876, surrounded by her family and a few devoted friends.

George Sand was buried in the cemetery at Nohant, in the family vault, and in the presence of a vast concourse of the population, which had learned to love and respect her, thanks to her untiring and unostentatious charity. It is said that during her life she spent about 300,000 francs in acts of benevolence!

Until the time of her death, George Sand worked incessantly. Whenever her strength failed her, she occupied her time in reading or drawing, or in teaching her granddaughters, and making up dresses and bonnets for their dolls.

When not so engaged, she would dress the *marionettes* for her son Maurice's private theatre.\*

In June, 1877, M. Clesinger, her son-in-law, made a statue of her, which was placed in the *foyer* of the Théâtre Français, at Paris. A committee, presided over by Victor Hugo, took the initiative in opening a national subscription, for defraying the cost of a statue of the illustrious writer to be erected in one of the squares of Paris.

Such are the main facts of the life of that wonderful woman who, under a man's name, is most deservedly enjoying a European and, it may be said, a world-wide reputation and whom France justly considers as one of its brightest literary glories!

Though in the life of George Sand there were incidents to which exception may be taken, Heaven must be blessed for the painful circumstances which placed a pen in her hand, and thus evoked a genius which otherwise might have ever remained latent. Her faults were the product of the society in which she lived, and were amply atoned for by her constant maternal devotion and untiring and unaffected love of her fellow-creatures. Her mind may have been at times weak and erring, but her heart was ever noble and good!

A superior writer, a lucid exponent of philosophical and political doctrines, a sagacious mind, attentive to the least movements of the human soul, her writings possess the ampleness, the feeling, and, so to speak, the charm of

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\* Built on the estate at Nohant for the rehearsal of the plays written by George Sand and her son Maurice.

Lamartine's *harmonies*; like the poet's verse, she causes us to dream, yet with this difference, that the *réverie* she awakes in us has always humanity for its aim, instead of tending towards the infinite, like the productions of the author of *Graziella*; and the charm of language having vanished, the meditation she provokes becomes social, instead of being, as with the poet, purely religious.

Early in childhood she was imbued with the great principles of Rousseau, and ever in after life the philosopher of Geneva was her master of predilection.

Her productions display irresistible charm. Her style is indefinable; it defies analysis. Splendour and precision seem to be its chief merits, apart from the admirable purity of language which she seems to have possessed at all times and, as it were, by intuition. Simple and bold, marvellously skilful in depicting or enabling us to foresee the most subtle details of fact or idea, abundant yet restrained, rich in resources of all kinds, and hardly ever allowing any image to mar the idea in view, docilely undergoing the moulding of inspiration, never losing any of its force or limpidity in its fanciful and multi-form mobility, such is that magical style to which nothing is foreign, neither the sublimities of nature, nor the sweet effusion of close intimacy, the spell of love, the fury of hatred!

Above all things, the mind of George Sand was that of a poet. But the versatility of her genius was not confined to romance. Although chiefly known in this country as a novelist, she was also in turn the powerful exponent of the philo-

sophical doctrines which enlisted her sympathies, a most brilliant political writer, and a distinguished playwright.

Her productions have often been denounced as immoral. She has long since been cleared from those imputations, and by the most competent of judges, so that there is no need here for any attempt to vindicate the morality of her works. Her novels may, in some instances, disturb and mislead ill-balanced minds; they will neither degrade nor corrupt them. When reading them, we experience a kind of painful admiration, and, on laying them aside, we aspire to truth with greater energy.

Victim of a social institution against which she had justifiable cause of complaint, she denounced the defects of French laws as regards the marriage tie, and proclaimed herself in favour of divorce when life in common has become unbearable. In her preface to *Indiana* she says: "Society should be taken to task for the disabilities it inflicts upon some of its members,—destiny for its whims. The writer is but a mirror which reflects those disabilities and those whims, a tracing machine, which, if the tracing be exact, the reflection faithful, need not apologise for showing facts as they are."

George Sand's mind was just and lofty, seeking social happiness in the solution of those fine humanitarian problems which party people obstinately stigmatise as utopian, in spite of the universal cry for the amelioration of the fate of the disinherited ones of mankind.

Some of George Sand's plays are not real dramas in the



full acceptance of the word. They are more suited to be read than to be performed. They are novels, almost *charades*. The personages therein speak, argue, discuss; they do not act.

In *Claudie*, *Mademoiselle de la Quintinie*, *Le Marquis de Villemer*, and *Le Pressoir*, however, she displayed such real powers of dramatic writing as to win for herself a place by the side of some of the leading French playwrights.

In her idyllic productions George Sand is truly great. In these she achieved for herself a reputation of her own, seldom equalled and never surpassed by other writers. When abandoning the dogmatic tone of the philosopher and the sectarian, she undertakes the part, truly suited to her, of the graceful narrator and poetess, her impassioned impulses, her keen, thrilling, and powerful accents shake our souls and cause the innermost fibres of our hearts to vibrate. With her master, Jean Jacques, she displayed boundless admiration for nature. How pure, how lucid, how free from redundancy, how soothing and refreshing—like the gay flowers and the balmy air of the dales, and the simple folk she depicts; how simple and unaffected, how true to nature her descriptions in such works as *La Petite Fadette*, *La Mare au Diable*, *Pierre qui Roule*, *Jean de la Roche*, etc., which the art of the narrator, the spirit of observation, and some pages full of unspeakable pathos raise above all contemporary romances.

Mr. Henri Martin, one of the most eminent historians of our times, says of George Sand: "A woman, born a great writer, and who will remain among the highest literary glories of France, stirred every soul by her pleadings against the

present state of society; at the same time expressing, in pictures of deep reality and marvellous poetry, a sentiment of nature which made of her the heiress and, as it were, the *daughter* of Rousseau."

The late M. Saint Marc de Girardin, the eminent professor of literature at the Sorbonne, described George Sand's rural novels the *Georgics* of France, than which no higher praise could possibly be bestowed.

RAPHAËL LEDOS DE BEAUFORT.

LONDON, *January*, 1886.

## CORRIGENDA. VOL. I.

*Page* 50, Footnote. The name "Lège" should be "Sèze."

„ 69, „ Letter "p" dropped out of "peasant."

*Pages* 73, 221, 225, 226, 228, 233, 236, 241, 246, 250, 256,  
257, Address. "Chatre" should be "Châtre."

„ 74, 166, 187, 190, 288, Name "Francois" should be  
"François."

*Page* 196, last line of page, between words "and" and "discuss"  
insert word "to."

„ 220, Footnote. Delete "Translator."

„ 263, Footnote should read "this appearance of that constellation." Delete "Translator."

„ 356, Heading of Letter. "Curé" should be "Curé."

„ 376, the line of quotation commencing "La fourmi qu'est."  
After word "aim" insert apostrophe thus: "aim'", showing elision of letter "e."

## INDEX TO PORTRAITS.

### VOL. I.

GEORGE SAND AT THE AGE OF 28. (From a Painting  
by Eugène Delacroix) . . . . . *Frontispiece*

GEORGE SAND AT THE AGE OF 27. (From a Portrait  
by Herself). . . . . *Facing page 129*

# LETTERS OF GEORGE SAND.

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*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN,\* who was on the point of leaving Nohant.†*

1812.

How much I regret not being able to wish you personally good-bye! You perceive how sorry I feel at leaving you. Good-bye, think of me, and be sure that I shall not forget you.

YOUR DAUGHTER.

Please to put your reply behind old Dupin's portrait.‡

*To THE SAME, Paris.*

NOHANT, 24th February, 1815.

Yes! dear mamma, I embrace, expect and desire you, and am dying of impatience to see you here. How anxious you are about me! Calm yourself, my dear little mamma, I

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\* Mademoiselle Aurore Dupin was then eight years old.

† Estate near La Châtre (Indre) belonging to Madame Dupin de Francueil, afterwards the property of George Sand.

‡ Pastel portrait of M. Dupin de Francueil, in the drawing-room at Nohant.

am wonderfully well. I take advantage of the fine weather. I walk about, run to and fro, enjoy myself, eat heartily, sleep better and think very much about you.

Good-bye, dear mamma; you see that there is no need to be uneasy. I kiss you with all my heart.

AUBORE.\*

*To M. CARON,† Paris.*

NOHANT, 21st November, 1823.

I received your parcel, my dear little Caron, and am very grateful for your kindness. All the errands I entrusted you with have been performed with the greatest punctuality, and you are as amiable as Father Latreille.

You have sent me enough marsh mallow to cut two million teeth. As I hope my heir‡ will not have quite so many, I made two bottles of syrup, which will cause you to lick your moustache if you make haste and come to Nohant, for my little one does not seem disposed to leave you much of it. The drug you sent had the desired effect, for baby has now two big teeth. You will fall in love with him: he is as handsome as yourself, and as nimble as his father. I could as easily catch hold of a frog; it could not leap better.

Good-bye, dear little daddy. We embrace you, and remain your good friends,

THE TWO CASIMIRS.§

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\* Mademoiselle Aurore Dupin was then eleven years of age.

† Old friend and correspondent of the family.

‡ Maurice, her son, then four months old.

§ The name of François Casimir Dudevant, her husband.

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*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN, Paris.*

I do not know the day of the month,  
all I know is that it is  
the Second Sunday in Lent.\*

I am delighted to learn that you are better, dear little mamma, and I hope that by this time you are quite well again; at least that is the earnest wish of my heart, and, if I could, I should like to see you once more fifteen years of age, a thing which I know would give you and many others great satisfaction.

You have set yourself a heavy task indeed in undertaking to wean a big boy like Oscar,† but you are thus rendering Caroline ‡ a true mother's service. My baby no longer requires a nurse; he is weaned. It is perhaps rather soon; but he prefers soup and wine and water to anything else, and, as he does not look for the breast, my milk is going without either of us caring about it.

The dear boy is superbly fat and fresh; he has a very bright complexion, and looks very decided, like his temper. He has only six teeth, but turns them to good account in eating bread, eggs, cake, meat, anything he can lay his hands on. He bites like a little puppy the hands which comb his hair, the latter a performance seemingly most disagreeable to him. He places his feet quite firmly when trying to walk, but is too young yet to be able to run after Oscar: in a year or two they will be fighting over their toys.

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\* It was the 17th of March, 1824.

† Oscar Cazamajou, George Sand's nephew.

‡ Madame Cazamajou, George Sand's eldest sister.

I hope, dear mamma, that the desire which you express to see us, and which we quite share, will soon be fulfilled. We expect to be able, about Easter, to introduce Master Maurice to his grandpapa, who does not know him yet, and is quite anxious to make his acquaintance, as you may well suppose. I want to take him by surprise. I shall not mention anything about it in my letters; I shall send Maurice without saying who he is. As for us, we shall be behind the door to enjoy the mystification. But I am wrong to tell you, for I mean to do the same with you; so do not expect me to inform you of my coming.

Good-bye, my dear mamma; give me some news about yourself. I embrace you with all my heart, and so does Casimir. As for Maurice, when people express the wish to kiss him, he turns his head away and presents his back. I hope you will break him of that bad habit.

*TO THE SAME.*

NOHANT, 29th June, 1825.

You must think me very lazy, my dear little mamma; and that, no doubt, I am. I am leading such an active life, that I do not feel heart for anything at night when returning home; I fall asleep as soon as I sit down.

Those, I will admit, are very unsatisfactory reasons; but, since we are all in good health, what news of interest can we give you of a quiet country place, where we live a still quieter life, receiving, as we do, few visitors, and giving our time to rural occupations, whose description



could scarcely amuse you? I have heard from Clotilde;\* in her letter she said that you were pretty well; that is why I felt secure about you, and kept silent, knowing that there was no cause for anxiety.

Had you carried out your intention of coming to Nohant, we should now, much to our regret, have to leave you. In a week's time I shall start for the Pyrenees. I have had the good fortune to entertain here, for a few days, two charming sisters, my intimate friends when we were in the convent; they are going to take the same waters as we, in the company of their father and of a most cheerful and amiable old gentleman friend. On their way from Châteauroux they could not help spending a few days at Nohant, which thus became for me a delightful spot, thanks to the presence of those good friends. I accompanied them part of the journey when they went away, and only left them with the promise of meeting them soon.

As you see, we are on the eve of starting on a little journey of over four hundred miles. It is not much for you who go to Spain as easily as one goes to Vincennes; but it is much for Maurice, who will be two years old to-morrow. I hope, however, that he will not mind that, if I am to judge by the journey to Nohant, which he appeared to look upon as too short. Besides, we shall travel only in the daytime and by post. We are, therefore, plunged in the horrors of packing up. We shall take with us Fanchon,† and Vincent,‡ who is delighted at the idea of travelling on the box of the carriage. As for myself, I shall be most happy at once more seeing the Pyrenees, which I scarcely remember, but everybody describes

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\* Clotilde Daché, née Maréchal, George Sand's cousin.

† Lady's-maid.

‡ Coachman.

as possessed of incomparably fine scenery. Do not fail to let us hear from you; for methinks anxiety for those we love increases with distance. Good-bye, my dear mamma. I kiss you tenderly, and wish you good health, and above all plenty of good cheer, for with you, as with myself, the one scarcely exists without the other. Maurice is growing a big child, and lovely as a Cupid. Casimir embraces you with all his heart. As for myself, I am pretty well, except a little cough and blood-spitting, which, I hope, will disappear when I take the waters.

We shall stay away two months at most at the watering-place; thence we intend going to Nérac, where we shall spend the winter at papa's.\* We shall be back at Nohant towards March or April, and shall expect you there with aunt and Clotilde.

*To THE SAME.*

BAGNÈRES, 28th August, 1825.

MY DEAR LITTLE MAMMA,

I received your kind letter at Canterets, and could not answer it for a thousand reasons, the chief of which was the anxiety and trouble caused by a serious illness of Maurice.

He is quite well again since we came here a few days ago, and where we have once more met with the sun and warmth. He has entirely recovered appetite, sleep, gaiety, and plumpness. As soon as he was out of danger, I took advantage of his convalescence to make excursions into the

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\* Baron Dudevant, George Sand's father-in-law.

mountains of Canterets and Saint-Sauveur, which I had had no time to visit. I therefore have not had a single day to myself for writing to anybody; everybody is angry with me, and so am I with myself. But after having, almost daily, ridden for twenty, thirty, thirty-five, and even forty miles on horseback, I used to be so tired that my sole care was to sleep, and then only if Maurice allowed it. The consequence was that I suffered much with my chest, and had frightful fits of coughing; but I was not to be daunted by such trifling ailments, and by keeping up violent exercise I have recruited my health, and developed an appetite which frightens the most voracious among my fellow travellers.

I feel so enthusiastic over the Pyrenees, that all my life I am going to dream and speak only about mountains, torrents, grottoes and precipices. You are acquainted with this fine country, though not so well as myself, I am sure; for many of the wonders which I have seen are hemmed in between some inaccessible mountain belts, which neither carriages nor even horses could ever cross. To reach them we had to ascend steep peaks, for whole hours climbing over gravel which gave way under us, and sharp rocks on which we left our boots and part of our feet.

At Canterets there is a very ingenious way of ascending rocks. Two men carry you on a chair fixed to a shaft, and leap thus from rock to rock, over bottomless precipices, with a nimbleness, security, and promptitude which calm all apprehension and cause you to brave all dangers; but, as they smell very strong three miles off, and as very often it is bitter cold after one or two o'clock in the day, chiefly on the mountain tops, I preferred walking. I leaped like them from stone to stone, falling often and bruising my

legs, but laughing nevertheless at my mishaps and at my awkwardness.

Besides, I am not the only woman who performs feats of valour. It seems as though the very air of the Pyrenees inspired the most timorous with audacity, for the female companions of my excursion followed suit with me. We went to visit the famous fall of Gavarnie, the wonder of the Pyrenees. It issues from a rock more than 7,000 feet high, cut as straight as a wall. Near the cascade there is a snow bridge, which you must touch in order to convince yourself of its being the work of Nature; the span, which is ten or twelve feet high, is quite perfect, and you almost fancy you see trowel marks in plaster.

Several among our fellow-tourists (for there are always numbers of people in those excursions) went away convinced that they had just seen a piece of masonry. To reach that wonder and get back again, we had to ride thirty-six miles on horseback along a path three feet wide, bordering a precipice which, at certain points, is known as the "Ladder" (*Echelle*), and so deep that the bottom cannot be discerned. That is not, however, the most dangerous part, for the horses are accustomed to it, and pass close to the brink without ever missing their foothold. What surprises me still more with those mountain horses is their steadiness on rocky steps, which only offer smooth and sharp edges to their feet.

Mine was very ugly, as they all are, but I obtained from him performances which could only have been expected from a goat; always galloping in the most dangerous spots, without ever slipping or losing his foothold, and leaping from rock to rock in the descent. I confess that I did not suppose such

feats to be feasible, and I should never have believed myself plucky enough to trust to him before having ascertained his capabilities.

Yesterday we rode out eighteen miles to see the grottoes at Lourdes. We had to creep on our stomachs in order to enter that of the "Wolf." After much exertion and fatigue we reached a hole a foot deep, much resembling a badger's den; a rather poor compensation for all our trouble, I will admit. I was accompanied by my husband and a couple of young gentlemen whose acquaintance we made at Cauterets, and whom we met again at Bagnères, together with a large number of our amiable and numerous Bordeaux society.

We were daring enough to enter the den, and, in about a minute, we found ourselves in a much more roomy recess, so far that we were able to stand up with our hats off, without any more serious inconvenience than getting our shoulders jammed.

Having walked a distance of about a hundred and fifty feet in that pleasant fashion, each of us holding a light and taking off our boots or shoes, so as to avoid slipping on the wet and rough marble, we came to the natural well, which, in spite of our torches, we could not see, as the rock here disappears all at once from under the feet, and the grotto becomes so obscure and so lofty that it is impossible to distinguish either the height or the depth.

Our guides, after much exertion, succeeded in breaking off some pieces of rock, which they flung into the darkness; we could then appreciate the depth of the abyss. The noise of the stone striking the rock was like a cannon-shot, and, falling back into the water like a thunder-clap, it disturbed it terribly. During fully four minutes we heard the immense disturbed

sheet of water striking the rock with fury and with a frightful noise, which sounded now like the hammering of counterfeit coin makers, and now like the hoarse and loud voices of a crowd of brigands. That noise, starting from the bowels of the earth, and added to the darkness and to the various dismal surroundings of the interior of a cavern, might have terrified less daring hearts than ours.

But at Gavarnie we had played with the templar's skulls; we had crossed the snow bridge, heedless of the warnings of our guides, who shouted to us that it was coming down. The Wolf's Grotto was therefore only child's play. We spent an hour in it, and came back loaded with fragments of the stones which we hurled into the abyss. These stones, which I intend showing you, are all filled with particles of iron and lead, which shine like tinsel.

On leaving the Wolf's Grotto we visited *Las Espeluches*. Our learned cousin, M. Defos,\* will explain to you how that *patois* name is derived from the Latin.

The entrance to the grottoes is truly admirable. I went in front alone, and was delighted to find myself in a magnificent hall, supported by enormous masses of rocks, which might be taken for pillars of Gothic architecture: the finest country in the world, the azure-blue stream, the brightest green meadows, a first crescent of thickly wooded mountains, and a second, on the horizon, of a delicate bluish hue blending itself with the sky, all that loveliness relieved by the light of sunset, viewed from a mountain top, across shady arcades of rocks; behind me the dark entrance to the grottoes: I was filled with admiration.

I thus visited two or three such peristyles, joined

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\* A distant relation of George Sand.

together by porticoes a hundred times more imposing and more majestic than anything man will ever produce.

My companions having come up in the meantime, we went through the intricate windings of a narrow and damp maze, when we beheld above our heads a magnificent hall, where our guide did not seem much inclined to take us. We, however, insisted. The gentlemen took off their boots and clambered rather cleverly; as for me, I endeavoured to scale the rock.

I crossed without difficulty a slippery marble edge, beneath which there was a deep excavation. But having now to leap over a hole which the obscurity rendered still more dreadful, slipping all the time, deprived of any hold for either foot or hands, I felt my heart give way. I was laughing, but I must confess that I was quite frightened. My husband tied two or three scarves round my body, and held me thus while the others pulled me by the hands. I do not know what became of my legs in the meantime. When I reached the top, I ascertained that my hands (which are still very sore) were not left in theirs, but I was amply rewarded by the sights which I beheld.

The descent was quite as perilous, and upon our leaving the place the guide told us that, during the many years he had accompanied strangers to *Las Espeluches*, this was the first time a woman had ascended to the higher level. We much enjoyed ourselves at his expense, by reproaching him with not often enough sweeping the apartments over which he was appointed to conduct visitors.

We reached Lourdes in an indescribably dirty state, and, I and my husband having mounted our horses, we took the road to Bagnères, while our young friends followed that

to Bordeaux. For thirty miles we rode through a pouring rain, and returned here at ten o'clock at night, drenched to the bones and quite famished. We are all the better for it to-day.

We are delighted with the two Arab horses which we have bought, and which will be the finest of their species ever seen in the Bois de Boulogne.

This is an interminable letter, my dear mamma, but you asked me for details, and I obey with the more pleasure that I am chatting with you. Clotilde also wants me to write to her; but I shall scarcely have time to do so to-day, and to-morrow my excursions will begin again. Please to kiss her for me; let her read this letter if you think it will amuse her, and tell her that in eight or ten days I shall be at my father-in-law's, and hope then to find leisure for writing.

Please to let me hear from you at his address, *viâ Nérac* (Lot et Garonne). I am longing for news; I am far, so very far from you and all mine. Good-bye, my dear mamma. Maurice is a lovely darling. In the excursions I speak of, Casimir is resting from those he made without me at Caunterets; he was out hunting on the highest mountains, and killed eagles, white partridges, and *isards*, a kind of chamois, whose remains he will show you; as for me, I am bringing you some rock crystal. I should have brought you some *barège* salt from Barèges itself, but it is not at all pretty, and very cumbersome.

Good-bye, dear mamma, I kiss you with all my heart.

When writing to my sister, please to give her a thousand kisses for me, and tell her that I am far from forgetting her; that this letter to you, and one to my brother, are the only



two which I found time to write while in the Pyrenees, but that as soon as I reach Guillery\* I shall write to her without fail. We contemplate staying there until January, when we shall go to Bordeaux to spend the Carnival, after which we intend in the spring going back to Nohant, where we shall expect you with my aunt.

*To THE SAME.*

NOHANT, 25th February, 1826.

MY DEAR MAMMA,

I am most unlucky! I went to Paris precisely at a time of the year when everybody is in town, and my luckless star prevented my meeting you.

I called at my aunt's, where I gathered that you had gone to Charleville. I was expecting you daily, but it was only on my return here that a letter from you convinced me of your still being in this world. It is rather awkward that I should, after two years' absence, go to spend a fortnight in Paris without meeting you. But I had been so long without news from you that I really thought you were back home. Even Caron, with whom we stayed, was convinced that you were still his neighbour. At any rate, I have not been lucky, and am now back in Berry, not knowing when I shall leave it, or when I shall have the pleasure of kissing you.

My health, in which you have the goodness to feel so much concern, is better than the last time I wrote; the proof of it is that I was quite strong enough to spend four

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\* An estate near Nérac, belonging to Baron Duderant.

nights in the coach, on my way going and coming, without feeling any the worse for it. Except for my nasty cough, which prevented my sleeping, I should have felt pretty well.

A thousand thanks for your kind advice in this respect, but do not scold me for not having carried it out very strictly. You know that I am rather incredulous, and a little of a doctor myself, not in theory, but in practice. I have never known any remedy efficacious in diseases of the chest; when it pleases Nature the disease gets cured, and the credit of it is ascribed to *Æsculapius*, who has had nothing to do with it. I know full well that physicians will never admit that. How could a doctor confess his incompetency? that would not be 'cute. If, like myself, they gave their advice gratis, they might be reliable, though perhaps vanity might yet prevent their being so.

At all events, without remedy or doctor, without having drowned my stomach with potions which do not reach the chest, I have succeeded in getting rid of my cough; that is the most important point. True, I still suffer pains, and now both sides of my face are swollen. But if the spring comes soon it will put everything right.

I must tell you, dear mamma, that had you come here to spend the Carnival, you would not have found the time weary. We are having charming balls, and devote two or three nights a week to dancing. You may well suppose that does not afford me much rest, or amuse me much, but there are obligations in life which must be obeyed as they come. Lately we left a ball at Madame Duvernet's\* at nine in the morning. A fine time to break off! are you not scandalised

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\* Charles Duvernet's mother, friend of George Sand's family.

at such dissipation? Of course, the *jubilee*, disturbed by so many fêtes, is not yet over. I hope that in two or three years' time we shall not hear any more about it. In the meantime, the priest inveighs every Sunday morning against balls, yet every Sunday evening we all dance to our hearts' content.

When referring to a scolding priest, you understand that I do not mean the one at Saint Chartier;\* on the contrary, he is so kind and genial that, if he were some sixty years younger, I could make him dance if I took the trouble to try.

He came here one day to celebrate two marriages—that of André† with a young woman whom you do not know, and who will enter our service at midsummer; and that of Fanchon, André's sister, and nurse to Maurice, with the lion of the village, the handsome excavator, Sylvinot,‡ whom, no doubt, you have quite forgotten, in spite of his *conquests*. The wedding took place in our stables, the *banquet* being served in the one while the other was transformed into a ball-room.

You will easily imagine how grand this all was; three *bits* of candle for illumination, plenty of *piquette*§ as refreshments, and an orchestra composed of a hurdy-gurdy and a bagpipe, the latter most screechy, and therefore quite to the taste of the simple country folk. We had invited several people from La Châtre, and indulged in a thousand games, such as disguising ourselves at night as peasants, and this so effectually that we did not know one another. Madame Duplessis looked charming in a red frock; Ursule,|| with a blue blouse and a

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\* A village near Nohant, in the Department of the Indre.

† George Sand's manservant.

‡ The diminutive of Sylvain Biaud.

§ Wine of inferior quality.

|| Ursule Josse, George Sand's maid.

large wide-awake hat, looked a very funny sort of fellow ; Casimir, dressed up as a beggar, collected coppers, which were given to him quite in earnest ; Stephane de Grandsaigne, with whom I believe you are acquainted, disguised herself as a well-to-do peasant, and, pretending to be tipsy, went to elbow and interfere with our sub-prefect, a very pleasant fellow, who was just about going away when he recognised us all.

All this was very grotesque, and you would have enjoyed it, I am sure ; you might possibly have been tempted to don a *bavolet*,\* and I take it there would have been no dark eyes pretty enough to compete with yours.

Do you contemplate going back to Paris soon, dear mamma, and are you still satisfied with your stay at Charleville ? Many kisses from me to my sister, as also to dear little Oscar. Casimir sends his tenderest homage ; as for myself, I beg you will not forget us when the spring comes.

Write, dear mamma, and accept my love.

*To BARONESS DUDEVANT, Pompiey, vid Port-Sainte-Marie  
(Lot et Garonne).*

NOHANT, 30th April, 1826.

We received your kind letter, dear madame, and have learned with regret the gloomy event † which cast fresh sadness on you, at the same time reviving the grief, already so deep, under which you laboured.

We feel and appreciate your painful and sad situation,

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\* A cap worn by French countrywomen.

† The death of Baron Dudevant, George Sand's father-in-law.

with the bitter regret of not being able to alleviate it, since nothing could atone for what you have lost, and no consolation, I feel, could reach your broken heart. It is in your own self, in that moral strength which you possess, or rather in the depth of your misfortune itself, that you will find the means of bearing up with it. If I have rightly understood your grief, no distraction, no expression of condolence, is powerful enough to cause you to forget it, even for a moment; proofs of sympathy you receive with meekness and kindness, but they cannot bring you any real relief.

Your sad thoughts alone enable you to enjoy what is indeed a sad pleasure too. The more you fathom them the less bitter they must appear. Yours are only sweet recollections. Your constant care had always been to surround his existence with what was sweet and pleasant! His happiness—that inexpressible happiness of so perfect a union—had been the aim of your whole life. Ah! I believe that, when there remain regrets without remorse, grief has its charm for a soul like yours.

Our journey has been fruitful in events; none, however, very serious. We came back through the Marche Mountains, in order to enjoy their picturesque and interesting scenery. That pleasure involved a thousand dangers. The horses we rode, being either half dead or extremely restive, were often on the point of throwing us off or of falling down some very steep inclines or winding roads bordering on deep ravines; but our star protected us, and we escaped with the fright. We all arrived in good health.

Since then Maurice has suffered from a violent cold, complicated with inflammation of the eyes. A solution of gum arabic for his cough, and infusions of mallow for

his eyes, afforded him great relief. He is now quite well again.

I thank you, dear and kind madame, for the interest you are good enough to take in my health. It is now fairly good, although I still suffer from rheumatism, as also from an obstinate pain in my head, of which I cannot rid myself. And yet I do not commit any imprudence, and, having no occasion for running about as at Guillery, I am here compulsorily quiet; but, my occupations being more important, I succeed in forgetting my troubles and in managing my affairs like a person enjoying unimpaired health. You are, dear madame, our chief thought; please to acquaint us with the state of your precious health.

My brother stayed with us a few days. He has gone back to Paris, where repairs to his house require his supervision. I prevailed upon him to allow his wife and daughter, whom the country air will suit better, to remain with us.

Good-bye, dear madame; pray write to us often, a few lines at a time, lest it should occasion you the least fatigue, but on no account leave us ignorant of how you are getting on. Casimir and myself embrace you tenderly.

AURORE D.

Please to remember me to kind Larnaudé;\* I almost dare to consider myself as one of his colleagues. I have taken up medicine, or, to speak more modestly, apothecary's work. M. Delaveau,† whom he knows, is my professor. It is he who prescribes and examines, I who prepare the drugs, apply the

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\* Druggist at Barbeste (Lot et Garonne).

† Charles Delaveau, physician at La Châtre, afterwards Member of Parliament (Député) from 1846 to 1876.

leeches, etc., etc. We have already effected some very fortunate cures. Smith,\* with his julep, could be very useful to me here.

Maurice has not forgotten Guillery. He always speaks of it, he knows the name of everybody there, and often talks about big *Totor*.† He has met here with something to make up for the absence of his *favourite* hen, which he also remembers, *so he says*.

*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN, Paris.*

NOHANT, 13th July, 1828.

MY DEAR MAMMA,

Your amiable letter came to hand some time ago, since when I have seen M. Duvernet, who informed me that he spent the day with you and friend Pierret.‡ He talked a great deal about you. You are aware of his being one of your most faithful and devoted admirers. He told me that you would come but for the fear of seeing us start off all of a sudden, and finding you had made a useless journey. That would be quite a groundless fear, for we have not the slightest intention of travelling for a long time to come; yet, were it not so, the pleasure of possessing you in our midst would overcome any desire we might have of going away.

When I say we, I speak of myself and child; for my husband has not made the vow of remaining in seclusion. He is at Bordeaux for the present, in connection with some un-

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\* Baroness Dudevant's servant.

† Term of endearment for Victor.

‡ Pierret, a friend of the family.

avoidable business, the payment for a house which he sold last winter, and which fell due on the 10th inst. I think he will come back *viâ* Nérac, and spend a few days with Madame Dudevant. I am not quite certain when he will be here. He had the intention of personally superintending his harvest. If he still so intends he will have to make haste, for the corn is ripe, and I am going to give orders to have it cut.

After resting a little from his journey, he will be compelled to undertake one to Paris respecting the investment of his funds. He will then plead our case *vivâ voce* before you, and perhaps prevail upon you to come back here with him!

You must have seen Hippolyte\* often. He will have told you that he left me his little girl, of whom I take care, and who is in splendid health. We have had some brilliant festivities: first of all the fête-day of Maurice's patron saint, on which occasion I gave a treat to about a hundred peasants. Dancing, popping of guns, the joyous pealing of bells, the strains of the bagpipes, and the songs of the revellers, mingled with the whining of sulky dogs, celebrated with much noise the anniversary of our young gentleman, who looked quite pleased.

We then had the visit of Mademoiselle George† at La Châtre. She gave two performances, which attracted all the district and turned the whole town and its environs upside down. I might mention many previous entertainments; but Hippolyte, no doubt, told you about our wild boar hunt; as also how Nohant is daily becoming more *brilliant*. We should be most happy if that could induce you to come.

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\* Hippolyte Chatiron, George Sand's brother.

† A celebrated actress and beauty.



Good-bye, my dear mamma; I send you tender love, and beg you will give us news about yourself. Excuse my having delayed so long writing. In my husband's absence I am so busy, being obliged to fill his place, that when evening comes I have not the disposition for writing, and go to bed awfully tired.

You must know that I am studying medicine, not for myself, for I little care about it, but for my tenants' sake. I have effected some very happy cures; but the profession also has its drawbacks.

G. S.

*TO THE SAME.*

NOHANT, 9th October, 1826.

MY DEAR LITTLE MAMMA,

Excuse my having so long delayed thanking you for all the trouble you have taken on my account. I have been so busy and disturbed, and you are so kind and indulgent, that I hope to be forgiven.

You have put yourself to much inconvenience respecting my costume and Maurice's. What you send us is lovely, and provokes general admiration throughout the place. As for the parure of dull gold, I attribute the pretty gift to Casimir, and the good taste displayed in its selection to yourself. Casimir prevented me from thanking you for it until now, always alleging that he preferred doing so himself. But he is so busy with his vintage that I take upon myself to express his gratitude to you. It is a feeling which may naturally be

shared by us both. Please to accept and believe it to be quite sincere.

You told us that you were suffering from a cold. I fear that the bitter weather which is setting in will not contribute to its cure. It affects me a great deal, and I begin the winter with pains and rheumatism. But, in order to avoid being as severely treated as last year, I wrap myself up in flannel, woollen under-shirts, and stockings. Squalidness apart, I look like a capuchin friar beneath his hair cloth. I begin to appreciate the advantages of this new *régime*, and scarcely feel the cold which used to freeze my very bones and make me quite despondent.

Take great care of yourself, my dear mamma. In turn, I am going to give you a lecture.

Thank God! Maurice displays all the appearances of robust health. He is tall, plump, and fresh as an apple. He is very good-hearted, very petulant, rather self-willed, though a little spoiled, easily forgetting his little troubles, and quite free from vindictiveness. I believe that his disposition will be feeling and affectionate, but that his tastes will be fickle. His naturally happy *insouciance* will, I think, cause him readily to accept accomplished facts. These are, as far as I can judge, his qualities and his defects, and I will endeavour to foster the former and to tone down the latter. As for Léontine,\* you will see her. She was charming with me. I knew how to take her. I was much grieved to part from her, and am very anxious about her journey. I feel that I miss her, and am afraid that she may not be as comfortable as with me.

Good-bye, my dear mamma. It is a fact, then, that

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\* Daughter of Hippolyte Chatiron and niece of George Sand.

Clotilde is in an interesting condition? I am delighted to hear it. Caroline does not write. Is Oscar getting stronger, and in better health? I kiss you most lovingly. Let us know how you are, and trust to your children.

AUORE.

*To M. CARON, Paris.*

NOHANT, 19th November, 1826.

MY DEAR CARON,

I very sincerely share your grief, the bitterness of which I fully appreciate. I know that you have been the model of a dutiful and loving son, and that tears were never more genuine than yours. I shall not offer you the vain and commonplace consolations generally lavished in similar cases. If you feel as I do, those sterile efforts could only increase and embitter your grief. Convinced that your intelligence tells you better than I could, all the reasons why we should submit to the immutable decrees of fate, I will confine myself to weeping with you with all the effusion of a heart sincerely devoted to you, and which will ever share your pleasures and your troubles. You are wrong in adding those sad but imaginary reflections to your, alas! too legitimate regrets. You say that the loss of your mother leaves you alone and forsaken in the world. No doubt, nothing can ever fill the place of a good mother; but you still possess some really true friends. You are worthy of them, and you know, I hope, that you possess some very sincere ones in Casimir and his wife. I regret not to be with you to dispel those black thoughts from your mind, and prove to you that there are still hearts that feel an interest in you.

*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN, at Madame Cazamajou's,  
Charleville (Ardennes).*

23rd December, 1826.

MY DEAR MAMMA,

You left me a long time without news from you, and I myself waited rather long also before thanking you for your kind letter. But I have been, and am still, so poorly that I have scarcely strength enough to write. The month of December is dealing hard with my health, and I suffer exhausting pains in my chest. I have lost both appetite and sleep. I cannot relish anything but pure water, and, as you may well fancy, that is not calculated to make one very stout. At night I suffer beyond bearing: my bed-covers feel like a hundred-weight on me, and I am reduced to watch the stars instead of sleeping. All that is very tiresome, but I will not lose patience. It will all pass away in time. For the last three years winter has been very trying to me, but with spring my health has returned. I am anxiously looking forward to that mild season.

You were quite right to leave Paris, where people kill and rob one another, and where there is less security than in the midst of the Black Forest. Caroline ought to be delighted with your society, and not regret Paris. Oscar must interest and cheer you up. I am very impatient to see him again; he must be getting quite strong and well advanced in his studies. Maurice is as handsome as a cherub. Madame Duplessis\*

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\* The wife of M. Duplessis, ex-colonel of Chasseurs-à-cheval, friend of Colonel Maurice Dupin, of George Sand, and of her father-in-law, Colonel Baron Dudevant.

is delighted with him. He also says lots of fine things in the most singular "béricho-gascon" *patois* ever spoken. You will also love him apart from relationship, for his temper is truly charming.

The poor viscount must feel wearied to death by your absence. You quitted him rather cruelly, it appears. That is just like you; but do people ever get used to harsh treatment? You pretend that when with you he is always dozing. I am sure he is absorbed in meditation, or gives way to a melancholy which may possibly be mistaken for slumber; but I feel convinced that, in your cruel mood, you denounce sighing as snoring.

Allow me to kiss you, dear mamma, and to wish you all kinds of prosperity, and, above all, good health. Good-bye. Let us hear oftener from you, and give my love to my sister. My love also to Cazamajou.\* Casimir kisses your hands.

G. SAND.

*To M. HIPPOLYTE CHATIRON, Paris.*

NOHANT, *March*, 1827.

I feel quite grieved by what you tell me of St. —; he will take care neither of his health nor of his interests, and spares neither his body nor his purse. The worst of it is, that good advice causes him to lose his temper, to taunt his true friends with playing the part of doctors, and to receive them in such a manner that they must keep their mouths closed. I knew all this long before

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\* George Sand's brother-in-law.

you told me, and had previously experienced many rebuffs at his hands.

I never took any notice of it, because I know what sort of temper he has, and that, as I have given him my friendship while being aware of his faults, I do not, now that he follows his inclinations, see any clear motive for withholding it from him. Your discovery must have damped your feelings, that I conceive. Your mutual friendship was yet but a scarcely solid acquaintance, expecting everything from the future, and unsupported by anything in the past. No doubt that is your case, and finding out that harshness of temper in some one whom I had judged different, I should, like yourself, have quite modified my views of the individual.

As for me, I wish I could cease to care for him, for it is for me a constant subject of trouble to see him always in the wrong path, and blindly refusing to perceive it. But we must love our friends to the bitter end, whatever they may do, and I cannot withdraw my affection when I have once given it. I foresee that, though possessed of all the means of success, St. \_\_\_\_\_ will never do any good for himself. That has long since been a foregone conclusion with me. The family he belongs to is much disliked in the district, and, I am sorry to say, there is much to justify that feeling. St. \_\_\_\_\_ has many of the faults of his brothers, and that is all people know about him; for his qualities, which are real and noble, those of a mind of a superior stamp, are not of a nature to strike the eyes of indifferent people, and to be appreciated otherwise than by being tested.

People will always find fault with me for being so fond of him; and, although they dare not express it openly, I often detect blame in the faces of those who compel me to under-

take his defence. From him I shall therefore derive nothing likely to flatter my vanity; it may, perhaps, on the contrary, have much to suffer from his condition. In examining too closely the unfavourable sides of his character, I should fear that I might cool down towards him, not for that very motive, but in reality to give way to all those considerations of self-respect and selfishness which lead us to judge all from our own stand-point, whereas we ought to put them under our feet.

However unfortunate he may become, St. \_\_\_\_\_ will ever be dear to me. Unfortunate he is already, and the more he becomes so the less the interest he will inspire; such is the rule of society. I, at least, will allay his misfortunes so far as lies in my power. He will find me ready to hold out a helping hand to him when all others have turned their backs upon him, and, should he fall as low as the eldest of his brothers, I shall still love him out of compassion, after having ceased to love him from esteem. That is only a supposition, in order to show you what sort of friendship mine is, for it is not natural to suspect any real wrong in those whom we love, and I am far from preparing myself to suffer the mortification of seeing him fall one step lower. But he will always be needy. Sad forebodings warn me that his efforts to improve his circumstances will only plunge him more deeply into poverty. That will be a great fault in everybody's eyes, except mine.

On that point you are exactly of one mind with me, since you urge me not to withhold my affection from him. You need not be uneasy about it. As for yourself, you are not so much shocked at his follies as at his blindness, which causes him to prefer false friends to true ones. I do not blame you for that impression. I merely request you to

temper it with your natural feelings of kindness and indulgence, and which will enable you to continue your good offices towards him, whether he should welcome them or not. Should he not acknowledge them, it will be from want of judgment, not from any want of heart.

Were I a man, having formed the determination to be of service to him, I should guarantee his future. But, being a woman, what I could obtain from him is almost reduced to *nil*, because of the difference of sex, of position, and because of a thousand other obstacles which thwart my good intentions. Cruel fetters these, which my affection curses, but which it nevertheless respects, since it is only given to love, however weak and inferior it may be compared with the other feeling, to break them.

*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN, Paris.*

NOHANT, 5th July, 1827.

Why do you not write to me, dear mamma? Are you unwell? If such were the case I should probably know it, for Hippolyte or Clotilde would have mentioned it. At any rate, since the 24th of March last, I have not heard a word from you!

You are quite forgetting me, and will cause me to regret not residing in Paris, if the absent are so little remembered by you. I am not demonstrative, but your silence grieves me and hurts me more than I can tell.

Is Caroline still with you? It would at least be a solace to me to know that you are happy and contented. I should then ascribe to no untoward cause that absence of



letters, and should alone suffer from it. But what thoughts are not likely to arise from that suspense? excepting an illness, of which I should be sure to learn by some one, I can imagine all. You must have some cause of grief, yet what grief could justify your thus leaving me in such anxiety? Hippolyte informs me that the Defos family is about to start for Clermont;\* will you not feel tempted to accompany them? You long ago contemplated going there; why not seize the opportunity? You might stop here on your way back, or else we might see you in Auvergne, where we are going to spend a few weeks, and bring you back with us to Nohant. If such is the surprise you have in store for me, I shall not complain of your having too long delayed its realisation.

Since I last wrote I have been in pretty good health; but have met with several accidents, in which I was within a hair's-breadth of losing my life. I should thus have died without a keepsake from you, and that would not have been one of my least regrets upon quitting this world.

I will not write at greater length to-day. I should scold you, and that would be rather ridiculous. I intended long since reproaching you with your laziness, but have always put off doing so with the hope that a letter would come; none, however, has arrived.

Good-bye, my dear mamma; excuse my being a little out of temper with you, and pray let me see that you remember the daughter whom you possess in Berry, and who loves you more than you think.

---

\* Clermont-Ferrand (Puy-de-Dôme).

*To THE SAME.*

NOHANT, 17th July, 1827.

MY DEAR MAMMA,

Thank you for having written. I was beginning to feel uneasy, not about your health, which I know to be unimpaired, but about your forgetfulness. Thank God, you are well, and can only complain of disappointments, although that alone is too much.

You are truly unfortunate in your choice of servants; yet, though you never met with a good one, that is not a reason to proclaim that such is not to be found, nor are you to conclude that you must resolve to wait on yourself. You will perhaps soon get tired of living with strangers, and, being often indisposed, it is not prudent for you to be alone at night. For that reason, and, apart from the fear you experience at night, and which is by itself a regular disease, likely to do you much harm, you ought not thus to isolate yourself from all help and care. Perhaps you select your servants too young, therefore subject to the faults of their age—flirtation and thoughtlessness. Methinks I should prefer a woman of riper years, although with such there is often the disadvantage of surliness and idle talk.

Do you remember Marie Guillard, that ugly-looking, good old woman, who, after having been long in service here, married an old man with only one eye? After about twenty years of married life she buried her husband and obtained a situation for her daughter, who is rather good-looking, and then, having once more become *single*, she re-entered our service. She is once more minding the poultry and cows

(which are not exactly those she used to take care of twenty years ago).

She is the oddest creature in the world. Active, hard-working, scrupulously clean and trustworthy, but the worst grumbling old soul you could imagine. She grumbles all day, and I believe also at night in her sleep. She grumbles while making the butter, while feeding the hens, and even when eating. She grumbles at other people, and when alone grumbles at herself. I never meet her without inquiring how the grumbling is getting on, and she grumbles all the more. She would wear out your patience, and so she would mine if her service brought her oftener in contact with me. Therefore, I do not propose that you should take her; her face alone would make you ill. At least, she is not any worse-looking than she used to be in her youth; hers are features which never alter, unfortunately for her.

Speaking about faces, I send you a profile which I drew from imagination; a regular daub. It is well that I should tell you it is Caroline whom I intended to represent. I am the only one who sees a likeness in it; that is rather unfortunate for the artist's talent!

Nevertheless, I send it as it is, trusting that, as you are more inclined towards indulgence than the rest, you will, by dint of imagination, succeed in discovering in it at least the general cast of the face, and the sweet and candid expression of the physiognomy. At all events, you are clever enough to touch it up. I leave it to you. I also drew my own portrait, but with more care and attention, for, having the model before my eyes, it has been not so much a work of imagination as of observation. Yet I did not succeed any more with it than with Caroline's. I even look so sad and senti-

mental on it, that I laugh in its face at seeing how pitiable it makes me appear, and dare not send it you. It reminds me of the following lines :

D'où vient ce noir chagrin qu'on lit sur son visage ?  
C'est de se voir si mal gravé.

(Whence comes the bitter sorrow visible on his face ?  
From seeing himself so poorly engraved.)

Hippolyte must have told you, my dear mamma, of my having written to Madame Defos to apologise for the absence of mind which prevented my acknowledging her when meeting her last, and to express the desire of seeing her at Clermont, if, as is my intention, I should go there next month.

You are probably referring to Mont-Dore when you tell me that I am only twelve miles from her ; whereas from here, by the mail road, the distance is nearly a hundred and fifty. That great distance leads me to fear that M. Defos may not carry out his resolution of coming to see us, unless some other business or the desire of travelling should induce him to pass through Nohant on his way to Paris, though that is a much less direct road, and badly off for hotel accommodation. Should he come in spite of those obstacles, I shall be delighted, and shall welcome him as well as I can. I dare not again insist on your undertaking the journey, though it would do you much good. You would no longer be frightened at night, or undergo the inconvenience of living at a boarding-house.

Good-bye, my dear mamma ; I write this letter in the glimmer of lightning and with thunder roaring overhead, which does not prevent Maurice and Casimir from

snoring almost as loud as the thunder itself. I am going to try to follow their example, and if we three together do not drown the noise of the storm, it will have to be really terrific. Write a little more frequently.

Take care of your health, and do not neglect any precaution. I embrace you fondly.

AUOREL.

*To M. CARON, Paris.*

NOHANT, 22nd November, 1827.

It has long been my intention to write to you, dear and kind friend, but my bad health, which is getting worse daily, prevents my doing anything useful, or even applying myself to the kind of occupation which is most agreeable to me, that is, chatting with people whom I love. Instead, I have been worried, for the last week, by being obliged to stand on ceremony with people absorbed in politics and electioneering (two things of which I understand very little indeed, but which we must pretend to understand for fear of being looked upon as impolite), and before whom we must appear to take a prodigious interest in the success of things of which we hear for the first time. Casimir looked like the head of a party all the time, and, thanks to his exertions, thoroughly Liberal deputies have been elected in all the neighbouring constituencies. I am delighted at it, though a great deal more at seeing that unthankful task over, and anxious and feverish looks no longer upon every face.

Casimir told me, my dear Caron, that you had been ill.

Let us hear from you. You seem to be forgetting all about us, and that is not right, for in us you possess real and devoted friends.

All fears on your part of our having cooled down towards you are perfectly groundless: the bad state of my health and the elections have alone been the cause of my long silence. Casimir informed me of your having had troubles. Whatever may have been their cause, rest assured that I share them at heart, and that your misfortunes will never leave me indifferent.

Here come our friends Duteil and the handsome doctor,\* who request me to remind you of their friendship and compel me to say good-bye. But, before closing this letter, we unite in a body to beg you to come here to rest yourself from all your worry, and drown your trouble in a stream of oblivion composed of champagne, a fresh spring of which Casimir has discovered in his cellar.

I think I shall be obliged to go to Paris for a week, in order to take advice respecting my health. It would be very kind of you to bring me back here, and to spend part of the winter with us. You may be quite sure that I shall bring Pauline away with me.

Good-bye, my dear Latreille.† I hope that you will favourably receive my proposal, and send you my love.

AURORE.

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\* Charles Delaveau.

† A nickname of M. Caron.

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*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN, Paris.*

NOHANT, 7th April, 1828.

MY DEAR MAMMA,

You are treating me with much severity, just as I had written to you, and scarcely expected you to be cross with me. You attribute to me motives of indifference of which you certainly do not believe me guilty. I flatter myself that while scolding me you rather exaggerated my faults, but that in your heart you do me more justice; for had you deemed me insensible to such grave reproaches, you would not have made them.

I trust that, on learning that my illness was the sole motive for my long silence, you quite forgave me. Tell me so without delay; I feel quite ill-treated by your scolding, and, to recover my health, I must be sure that you do not withhold your kindness from me.

I have learned through the Maréchal family\* some news which profoundly distressed me. I am ill through grief and anxiety. I have, however, just received a letter from Hippolyte, informing me that Clotilde is much better. But her daughter is dead! Poor Clotilde, how unfortunate she is! she, so kind and loving! she did not deserve such cruel sorrows. She is still unaware of the loss of her child; but she must, sooner or later, learn it, and how bitter that fresh trouble will be to her! I am sure that my poor aunt is heart-broken. Everything here below is grief and misery.

You inform me that Caroline is ill. Whatever can be the matter with her? I hope it is not serious, since you mention

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\* George Sand's uncle and aunt.

it so briefly. Please let me hear about it at greater length, my dear mamma, and also give me more details concerning your own dear self. I wonder whether it is to punish me that you give me such bad news, without adding a word to palliate. That would indeed be an excess of severity.

Maurice is in wonderful health. He is becoming daily better-looking and more loveable.

Yet I ought not to boast of my happiness, when I think of that poor Clotilde, whose fate in that respect is so different from mine. Comfort and pleasures are nothing to a mother's heart as compared with her children. Were I to lose Maurice, nothing on earth could bring me any consolation in the seclusion in which I live. He is so necessary to my existence, that in his absence everything seems wearisome to me.

Do not leave me any longer with the grief of knowing you to be dissatisfied with me. Write, dear mamma; my heart is very sad, and a word from you would relieve it from a great weight.

Casimir kisses you tenderly.

AUOREE.

*To M. CARON, Paris.*

NOHANT, 16th April, 1828.

Your letter, my dear Caron, has just come to hand. It affords me so much pleasure that I will answer it at once. You are a thousand times kind in making up your mind to come and visit us. Casimir and myself are so delighted at the good news that we dance about for joy. By the same mail I



renew my invitation to Madame Saint Agnan,\* whom I shall welcome with the greatest pleasure, as I told her scores of times, and which I hope she does not doubt.

I do not know how many *daughters* she will bring with her. One, I know, is at school ; but were she to bring them all, my house is large enough for their accommodation, and there are chickens enough in my farm to provide for the wants of a whole regiment.

I have a request to make you ; it is, in case Madame Saint Agnan should intend taking her maid with her, to dissuade her from doing so, as though the suggestion came from yourself, and to tell her that she will not require one here, since mine has nothing to do, and will therefore be entirely at her disposal. I should not like her to suspect my repugnance in that respect, as she might perhaps think it ungracious on my part. She would be quite mistaken, for I shall be delighted to receive her and her family. You also know that it is not for fear of having one more boarder, since there is often more food consumed in my house than I am myself aware of. The only reason of my recommendation is that I fear the presence of strange servants, because my Berry folk are simple and good peasants, quite ignorant of all the tricks of Paris people.

Last year Madame Angel's maid quite upset my house with her complaints and talk. Some of my people gave me notice to quit with the intention of going to Paris, where that girl pretended to find situations for them ; others wanted double wages, etc. I mention these trifles, because one word from you to Madame Saint Agnan might save me any such unpleasantness. If, however, she should insist, do not say any

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\* A friend of George Sand's family.

more about it, and consider that I have not spoken. You easily guess that so small a consideration can never diminish the pleasure I shall have in seeing her.

Good-bye, my good friend, come as soon as you can. Your room is waiting for you ; Pauline's bed shall be beside yours, or, if you prefer, close to Maurice's, in my own room. We are impatiently expecting you ; I kiss you with all my heart.

Your daughter,  
AURELIE.

Our La Châtre friends will be delighted with the news of your coming.

*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN, Paris.*

NOHANT, 4th August, 1828.

MY DEAR MAMMA,

It is quite true that I have been a long time without writing, but I never ceased inquiring after you from Hippolyte. He will also tell you, that three times in succession I asked him for your address without his sending it. I looked into your previous letters without being able to find the address that you gave me. I only learned it in his last letter, which reached me about the same time as your own. I felt quite annoyed, I assure you, not to know where you were. I am now delighted to hear of your being again settled in Paris, in the society of your child\* and in the enjoyment of good health. Pray kiss the dear boy on my behalf, and keep

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\* Oscar Cazamajou, Madame Dupin's grandson.

him as long as you can, as I am very anxious to see him.

By-the-bye, I cannot tell when I shall have the pleasure of kissing you. I think that I shall stay here during my confinement, where I shall spend the first months following my recovery more comfortably and economically as regards my diet. If business permits, I intend spending part of the winter with you. The general state of my health is pretty good, although for the last few weeks I have been suffering much from the stomach. To avoid this trouble I am obliged to eat but very sparingly. That entails great privation, as I feel ravenously hungry, a feeling which I cannot satisfy without incurring the penalty of several days' suffering and absolute fasting.

I am not strong, and the least ride in the carriage tires me extremely. But for all that I am pretty well. I am so big that everybody thinks that I must be mistaken in my calculations, and that I shall be confined very shortly; I nevertheless do not think that it will be before two months.

Casimir begs me to say that he is quite dissatisfied with M. Puget's want of exactitude towards you, and cannot refer you to M. Lambert, who no longer practises as a solicitor, and has given up his Paris residence. From next quarter he will entrust the management of your affairs to a person thoroughly trustworthy and exact. I saw Léontine for a short time. She was pretty well; I am going to fetch her to-morrow for a few days.

Good-bye, my dear mamma; rest from your fatigue, that I may also receive you. That will never be too soon to satisfy my impatience. Much tender love from Casimir, Maurice, and myself.

Dear papa is quite busy with his harvest. He has adopted a new threshing process for corn, which performs in three weeks the work of five or six months. But he is working heart and soul. Clad in a blouse, he is up at day-break, rake in hand.

The labourers are obliged to follow his example, but they do not complain, as the wine of the district is served out to them most unsparingly. As for us women, we sit all day long on the sheaves of corn with which the yard is filled. We read, we work a good deal, and scarcely think about going out. We have also plenty of music.

Good-bye, dear mamma, commend me to the friendship of the viscount. Maurice is as thin as a spindle-shank, but straight and spirited like a man. People think him very handsome ; he has quite a proud look.

*To M. CARON, Paris.*

NOHANT, 20th January, 1829.

It is very true that I am lazy, my *worthy* old friend. You know that I am quite capable of roasting my feet rather than move them, and of bespattering a letter with blots rather than take the trouble to sharpen my quill. Every one has his own ways. You are yourself not free from laziness when you like, though never when requested to render a service ; I have had a thousand opportunities of ascertaining that, and am rather ashamed to trespass so often on your extreme kindness.

In a previous letter, which must have miscarried, I requested you to forward me :

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The *Mémoires de Barbaroux*, those of *Madame Roland*, and *Victor Hugo's Poems*.

I have two volumes of Paul Louis Courier, entitled *Mémoires, Correspondance, et Opuscules Inédits*. A third volume must have appeared containing fragments concerning *Xenophon, L'Ane de Lucius, Daphnis et Chloé*, etc., etc. Besides, I should like to get his best works, containing political pamphlets and literary opuscules, clandestinely printed at Brussels, in octavo size. It will perhaps be difficult to procure the last-named. With the aid of Ajasson, Hippolyte will no doubt help you to ferret it out. When going to the bookseller please to take this letter with you, in order not to make the mistake of purchasing what I already possess.

Please not to confuse the *Mémoires de Barbaroux*, the *Girondist*, concerning the revolution, with a fresh publication recently written and brought out by his son, *C. O. Barbaroux*, and appended to a biographical essay on the members of the *Chamber of Peers (Chambre des Pairs)*. Before reading the history of those now living, I shall wait until they die, and, if I should die first, I shall do without it.

Do not infer from this that I disdain the productions of my contemporaries; I only mean to say that posterity will judge men more impartially than we can. I should also like to have something from Benjamin Constant, and, above all, from Royer-Collard. But what! am I ignorant of their publications? Please to help me, and send me what works you think most remarkable and within the grasp of an idiot like myself.

Is that enough? I pity you sincerely, old fellow, if you have many women like me to attend to.

As a diversion to *business orders*, for my letters are nothing

else, I subjoin the *lamentable* narration of an event which recently took place at La Châtre. You are aware that there are seven or eight circles which do not mix together, you also know that Périgny\* and myself, who pose as *philosophers*, invite everybody.

As for myself, I shall have no reception this year ; but he has begun his soirées. The first went off pretty well, except that the most fashionable among his lady guests were quite overcome with surprise in seeing themselves *amalgamated*, as it were, with what they call the *canaille*, although that *canaille* is quite as good as they are, and often better. The admission of the professor of music and of his wife, a very nice lady, roused quite a storm of indignation, and the rumour went abroad that M. de Périgny's civilities towards the said musician were prompted by the desire of saving a five-franc fee for the soirée.

Taking advantage of that incident, yet wishing to avoid bringing on the scene the innocent musician and his guileless better-half, we, that is to say friend Duteil and myself (authors of that unworthy song), held up our own personalities to the shafts of satire, by running ourselves down (at the first soirée, we both kept the orchestra); thanks to that clever ruse, we removed the suspicion which would have attached to us had we divulged our *poetical genius*, for we are going in for it. When in Paris, I dare say Duteil sang to you a few *complaintes*† of our own composition ; what do you think of them ? we are so very witty that we almost feel *ashamed* of it. We showed the above-mentioned song to M. and Madame de Périgny, who laughed heartily at it, and authorised us to

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\* Sub-Préfet of La Châtre.

† Popular topical songs ; in this instance, satirical.

circulate it *clandestinely* under the condition that their knowledge of it should be kept secret.

Just fancy the face people will make, and yourself too, when, with pitiful looks, they are told that an impertinent libel, *double-edged weapon*, and which speaks of us in very disparaging terms, is being circulated through the town. Do you foresee the air of philosophical generosity with which we shall express our contempt for such an outrage? I was almost forgetting to tell you that nobody went to the second soirée but that music-master, Casimir, and myself; of course, the song makes mention of that desertion; but you must know that I had the honour of being one of the three guests who cut such a pitiful appearance at the end of the last verse. We are waiting for to-morrow in order to see whether the cabal is still carried on. I want to satisfy myself in that respect, and intend to go and see. Now you are acquainted with all the gossip.

I shall write to Félice as soon as I can. In the meantime, please to give her my love, tell her I do not care about learning millinery, and that it is sufficient for me to know that she is well and does not forget me. At all events, I shall tell her that myself in a few days. To-morrow, I shall see all your *sweethearts* and deliver your messages.

Good evening, old fellow; farewell, sleep fifteen out of sixteen hours, and always love your daughter.

AURORE.

Casimir begs to be affectionately remembered, and Maurice sends *many kisses* to Pauline. By-the-bye, I have a whole service of Verneuil\* china for her; but how am I to send it?

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\* Pottery district near Nohant.

The cost of carriage would be greater than the thing is worth; tell me what you think about it.

*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN, Paris.*

NOHANT, 8th March, 1829.

MY DEAR MAMMA,

I long ago intended writing to you, and thank goodness Lent has come at last and affords me time to do it. They never led in Paris a more active and more *dissipated* life than we here during the Carnival: rides on horseback, visits, soirées, dinners, every day was taken up, and we lived a great deal less at Nohant than at La Châtre in riding to and fro.

At last we have resumed a less exciting life, and in order that my seclusion may be as pleasant to me as the pleasures which I have had, I must begin by inquiring how you are, and assure you that I wish you were here. Your health would benefit by the change, and I feel convinced that you would enjoy yourself. A little drive in the carriage, and the society of *cheerful* and amiable persons like those who compose our intimate circle, would quite suit you, for you are, like myself, averse to restraint and the formalities of society. The fireside has also its charms. Hippolyte cheers it up by his easy and even temper, always kindly disposed and satisfied. We laugh, sing, and dance like mad people, and for many winters I have not felt so well as I do now. The credit all belongs to Hippolyte.

Have you still your little companion Oscar? Hippolyte tells me he is very nice, but rather delicate in health. Maurice is growing much, but is not very robust now. It



is, so they say, the age when temperament develops itself, not without some effort and fatigue. He is handsome as an angel, and very good. His sister is a mass of flesh, white and pink, on which neither mouth, nor eyes, nor nose is yet discernible. She is a superb child; but before having any hopes of her really being a girl, we must wait until the face grows into shape. For the present she possesses two, the one as round and plump as the other! . . . She still has a good nurse, with whom she seems quite satisfied.

Next month you will see my husband, who will go back with Hippolyte to sell his horse. On his return we shall go to Bordeaux for a month, which we shall then leave to spend a month at Nérac, at my mother-in-law's, coming back here again about July. If you should then mean to keep your promise, and should also induce Caroline to come with you, we shall spend at home all the time you may feel inclined to give me; for I shall have no other engagement for this year, and without engagements I should never leave Nohant, where I am rooted. We will take every care of you, and you will grow so young again that you will go back to Paris quite fresh-looking, and still very dangerous for many hearts there.

Good-bye, my dear mamma. Casimir, Hippolyte, both my children, and myself embrace you tenderly. You will have to mind yourself in the midst of the struggle, and consider yourself lucky if you are not smothered by the efforts of each to secure a due share of kisses.

When replying will you be good enough to advise me as to the style which I should adopt for a most beautiful *foulard* dress just sent me from Calcutta, and which I intend making

up, provided that you tell me what the present fashion is and how the sleeves should be cut. I believe that they are now worn quite straight and as wide on the wrist as on the shoulder. But enlighten me, for I am much behind in that respect.

AUORE.

*To M. DUTEIL,\* Barrister-at-Law, La Châtre.*

BORDEAUX, 10th May, 1829.

Alas! my esteemed friend, how cruel, how fearful, how dreadful, and to say even more, how *boring*, it is to quit one's native place and find oneself, within so short a time, transported three hundred and fifty miles away from one's home! If that be severe grief to all respectable hearts, it is specially so to a *Berrichon* heart, so much so that I narrowly escaped being drowned in a torrent of tears shed by Pierre,† Thomas,‡ Collette,§ Pataud,|| Marie Gaillard,¶ and Brave;\*\* a torrent to which I myself added another and abundant one. Did I say a torrent? Why, it must have been a whole ocean!

Having kissed those priceless servants, each and all in turn, I made a dart at my carriage with the help of three persons, and arrived at Châteauroux without any untoward

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\* Alexis Pouradier Duteil, barrister at La Châtre, afterwards President of the Court of Appeal at Bourges, a position to which he was appointed subsequently to his having held that of Procurator-General to the same Court.

† Pierre Moreau, gardener.

§ George Sand's mare.

¶ The cook.

‡ Thomas Aucante, cowherd.

|| Watch-dog at Nohant.

\*\* Dog from the Pyrenees.

incident. There we were rather singularly amused by the piquant and jocose conversation of M. Didion, who, for the fifty-seventh time, gave us the account of his wife's illness and death, without omitting a single particular.

When at Loches, you perhaps fancy, my friend, I amused myself with the thought that those blackened turrets among which my cook was dying of the spleen, had once been the residence of a King of France and of his Court; or that I applied to the inhabitants for information respecting Agnes Sorel? . . . My mind was differently occupied. I was thinking with composure, with emotion, of the passage through this town of the respectable philanthropist, M. Blaise Duplomb,\* *who was overtaken by rascally gens d'armes who tied him to the tails of their horses and . . .* But you know the rest! It is too painful to dwell again upon such deplorable incidents.

Anyhow, my worthy friend, the present is to tell you that after five days of a tiring and dangerous voyage across burning deserts and among tribes of cannibals, after a sail of five minutes' duration on the Dordogne, during which we incurred more perils and bore more miseries than La Pérouse throughout his career, we landed safely at Bordeaux, which is almost as fine as one of the suburbs of La Châtre, and where I am quite comfortably settled. I nevertheless miss you, my dear friend, as also your snuff-box and the two white lilacs which grow in front of my windows at home, and for which I would give all the edifices being built here.

. . . Good-bye, my honourable comrade. Let us always lend the help of our intelligence, and of that immense

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\* Landed proprietor at La Châtre.

superiority which Heaven graciously granted to us (that is, to you and me), to the cause of common sense, nature, justice, not forgetting morality, the free culture of tobacco, and the *régime* of equality.

Remember me to Agasta.\* As for you, brother, I give you the accolade of friendship, and beg you not to forget me.

Alas! away from the Fatherland, the sky is of brass, potatoes are underdone, and coffee overroasted!!

The streets here are the stony separation; the river, the watery separation; the men and women the separation of flesh and bone. *Vide* Victor Hugo.

LIBRARY

AURORE.

OF NEW YORK

To M. CARON, Paris.

BORDEAUX, 4th June, 1829.

Amiable, estimable, respectable, and venerable octogenarian, it is in order to obtain information respecting your precarious and precious health that the present epistle is addressed to you by your obedient and dutiful daughter. How do you treat, or rather how are you treated by the gout, catarrhs, expectorations, colds in the head; in a word, the innumerable train of evils which have assailed you for nearly the whole forty-five years I have had the pleasure of knowing you? Heaven grant that you may preserve the little hair left you, as also the two or three teeth you still possess, as you will retain, unto death, the sympathy and devotion of all those around you!

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\* Madame Duteil.

It is also to tell you that we are in Bordeaux, a large and well-built city, and sorely regret that you were unable to carry out the project which you had formed of coming to enjoy yourself with us. Ah, good father! untold and unspeakable would have been the care, the affection, and, above all, the bottles of Bordeaux with which we should have surrounded your old age. Our love and good eating would have restored to you that freshness of youth which, though in vain, you now so much regret. We should have fed you on raw artichokes, and thus procured you beneficial sweatings, and a refreshing sleep would have lulled you until one o'clock in the afternoon. But, alas! where are you?

You must bear in mind, my dear friend, that here we trot about like hares, and that we idle about like . . . like you. We go to the theatre, to the café, to the country, on the river; we visit the collections, the churches, the vaults, the dead, the living. There seems to be no end to it. We are going to the seaside in a couple of days. We are about to trust our august persons and precious lives to the whimsical waters, to the impetuous winds, and to the risky knowledge of a skilled pilot. Pray for us, holy man, austere and seraphic elder! If we should perish in the attempt I promise to come and pull your toes. You shall see my pale ghost, wearing wreaths of green algæ and emitting a strong smell of the sea, hovering around your bed and screeching like a seagull during your sleep. Then, pious cenobite, recite your beads and sprinkle holy water about you.

If, however, as I hope, a less poetical fate should see me back safe at the "*Hôtel de France*,"\* I shall, a few days afterwards, start for Guillery, where pray send your reply, and that

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\* At Bordeaux.

of my little Félice, to whom you will be good enough to remit, *in propria manu*, the enclosed letter.

We have here M. Desgranges,\* whom, I believe, you know; and also the Advocate-General,† who requests me to say a thousand affectionate and kind things on his behalf.

Besides which we are surrounded by a dozen not very entertaining relations, in addition to two or three most amiable friends, who are constantly with us. Time flies too quickly in the midst of these distractions, which have done much good in cheering me up.

I shall, nevertheless, have soon to resume my quiet life at Nohant. That thought does not disturb me much. Like yourself, dear papa, I possess a degree of nonchalance and apathy which enables me to embrace without effort a sedentary and, as Stephane says, *animal* life.

But what are your occupations at present? Are you not a little sick of business, and will you not be able to dispose of a few days for yourself? You are aware that you formally and solemnly bound yourself to come and rest with us as soon as the occasion should offer. I sincerely wish that that occasion might occur without further delay, and, in the meantime, I have the honour of being, virtuous paterfamilias, your daughter and friend,

AURORE.

Casimir sends his love, and requests you to occupy yourself with his business matters—I do not know which.

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\* A Bordeaux shipowner.

† M. Aurélien de Lège.

*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN, Paris.*

BORDEAUX, 11th June, 1829.

Can you tell me, my dear little mother, what you know about that story of a wreck which so struck me in my childhood, and which happened, as far as I can recollect, near the place where I am now? I can still picture to myself the fright you were in. I recollect my father leaping into the water to save his sword, after having put us in a place of safety. I still hear the sailors cursing, and see the water rushing into our boat.

Tell me all about it, that I may understand what happened to me, and boast of having passed through a famous danger. That will be all the more necessary to my glory, inasmuch as in the expedition through which I have just been I have not had the satisfaction of encountering the least storm.

Having been everywhere, you must know the Tower of Cordouan, standing alone on a rock in the middle of the sea, facing the coast of Saintonge. Gascony people pretend that it is a difficult and perilous voyage; yet, see how vexing, the only time that we went there the winds were favourable, the water calm, and the pilots excellent! In fine, our humiliation was complete; none of us were sick, and we returned as unshaken, as cheerful (I can scarcely say as fresh-looking, for we were as black as Kaffirs and as red as Caribbeans), in short, as active and free from fatigue as though we had been for a walk on the Boulevard de Gand.

So easy a success makes me mightily anxious to go round the world on board a ship, and to take a trip to China as readily as one takes a pinch of snuff. Do not, however, take

undue alarm at this scheme, and do not believe that you are some day or other going to receive a letter from me dated from Pekin. For the present I shall endeavour to be satisfied with the *pekins*\* who surround me, and in a month at most I shall again see Nohant, which also possesses its Chinese and its grotesque characters.

Hippolyte informs me that you almost intend coming to Nohant this summer. Please God that you may persist in that happy idea!

Good-bye, dear mamma, I kiss you; but no, I am unworthy of it. I kiss your slipper.

AUROC.

*TO THE SAME.*

NOHANT, 1st August, 1829.

MY DEAR MAMMA,

I am back at last, and Hippolyte and his family are here with us. His wife is very tired, but I hope that a few days' rest will restore her to health. I spent a very pleasant fortnight at mother-in-law's, from which I feel quite benefited. I greatly needed the change—I felt so unwell that I was losing all patience; still, everything considered, I am satisfied with my voyage, and excepting the last month, during nearly the whole of which I was laid up in bed, my stay at Bordeaux offered me many pleasures to my taste, that is to say, no visitors and plenty of excursions.

I nevertheless experienced infinite comfort at finding

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\* A term of disparagement applied by soldiers to civilians, indicating oddity.



myself once more at home in the midst of those whom I love. We only want your society to be completely happy.

We relish fully the calm of a peaceful and retired life; we are not troubled by importunate intruders; ours are sincere and true friends—at least, so we think. Our days slip by like hours, and yet nothing interferes with their uniformity. The profound quiet is much to the taste of my sister-in-law. It also suits Hippolyte, as it gives him perfect freedom, love of which is his characteristic. He rides a great deal. We constantly see our old friends; but I have, by degrees, quietly limited the circle of my acquaintances. It tired, and I might almost say worried, me a great deal to see so many people. A numerous and superficial society is not suitable for me, and I believe that you quite share my opinion, that the fireside is preferable to an ever-changing panorama of fresh faces, which come and go without giving us time to appreciate their qualities and their defects. I have therefore limited myself to two or three women upon whose friendship I can rely, which is a thing not often met with. / As for those among my friends who belong to the sterner sex, they do not make a very brilliant show, but they are the best-hearted in the world; you saw a sample of them in the person of our friend Duteil, who can have no pretensions to being either handsome or elegant, that I will admit, but who atones for all by his wit and tact, and who possesses the most even and amiable temper I ever knew.

You long ago promised, my dear mamma, that you would come and renew acquaintance with Nohant; you cannot choose a better opportunity to do us that pleasure, since Hippolyte and his wife are already here, and no business matter is likely to necessitate my leaving home for some

months yet. If you should feel strong enough to undertake the journey, you will always find us most happy to take care of you and to offer you as much distraction as lies in our power.

My children are in good health. Maurice sends a kiss, and so do we all, with your permission. But in return I shall expect for my share a bigger kiss than the rest.

AURORE.

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN,\* Paris.*

NOHANT, 2nd September, 1829.

SIR,

M. Duris-Dufresne † has sent me your reply to the proposals he kindly consented to place before you on my behalf. We agree from this moment, and, if my offer suits you still, I shall expect you at the beginning of October. All the good which M. Duris-Dufresne told us respecting the method and the professor, makes us rather anxious to become acquainted with both, and we shall endeavour to render your stay among us as pleasant as possible.

If your method should allow of some preliminary preparation, and which it might be within my reach to give my son, will you, pray, point it out to me, as it might be calculated to simplify your work; if not, I shall train him to always display towards you docility and gratitude, which last feeling, rest assured, will be shared by his parents.

Receive, Sir, etc.,

AURORE DUDEVANT.

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\* Jules Boucoiran, Maurice's tutor, afterwards intimate friend of the family. He became, later, chief editor of the *Courrier du Gard*.

† Duris-Dufresne, Member of the Chamber of Deputies for the Department of the Indre.

To M. CARON, Paris.

NOHANT, 1st October, 1829.

MY DEAR CARON,

I am your servant; I salute and embrace you cordially. Now, tell me what you have done with a certain letter from Félicie, which you mention as being sent, but which never reached me. For shame, to be so careless at your age! Look on your desk, and make up for your oversight by sending it soon, accompanied by a long letter from yourself.

Allow me to entrust you with a few errands. It is a long time since I *bothered* you, as Pauline says, and it would be a pity to lose that wholesome habit. Be good enough to purchase for me three or four small boxes of coral powder for the teeth, like the one which you once gave me; also, an ell of *black levantine*, large width; it is intended to make a seamless apron. You will easily get that in a good silk warehouse. I have also a guitar at Puget's, and that I should like to get back. Please to request Madame Saint Agnan to claim it for me, and, if there is no box to it, have it packed up and keep all ready at your place, where M. de Sèze will call to fetch them for me. That will afford him the pleasure of seeing you, which he is very anxious to do. He asked us for your address.

Pray also give him the volume of Paul Louis-Courier, and receive all my thanks.

AURORE.

*To M. JULES BOUÇOIRAN, Nohant.*

PERIGUEUX, 30th November, 1829.

MY DEAR JULES,

How are my children? How are you yourself? and all my people? I am impatient to hear about yourself and them. I am without news, and on the point of growing uneasy in that respect.

You were back at Nohant on Friday evening. You ought to have written to me on the next day; I may possibly get a letter to-morrow from you or from my brother. I want it, in order to be quite happy; as, in *all other respects* (you pretend that that is my favourite expression), I am quite well in mind and body.

My journey was, if not rapid, at least very lucky. I feel quite strong, and my heart is pretty well satisfied. Make haste then, and tell me that my family is also in good health; and, above all, my little Maurice, the little rogue, whom however I love more than anything in this world, and but for whom there would be no happiness for me. Does he sleep and eat well? Is he cheerful? Is he quite well? Do not be too indulgent to him, and yet, as much as you can, make him fond of his studies. I know full well that that is no easy task. When I am with him to wipe his eyes, and see him fall asleep in his cot, I do not much mind; but, afar, my weakness as a mother is roused, and I am only grieved when I think that he is perhaps crying over his lesson-book. What a silly thing man's childhood is, and a silly thing, too, his whole life!

In short, my dear boy, do for my child what you would, what you will do some day for your own son. Watch over his education, but, above all, over his health. Keep also an eye

on my little girl and attend to her when she cries. I have already told you all this. I am repeating myself and become wearisome, like most old women. You will excuse me, for you also have a mother, and if you should fall ill under my roof, I would attend to you like her. I have entrusted to your care my most precious treasure; you engaged to hold yourself responsible for it.

Be sure to answer all my questions; do not grow tired of repeating scores of times the same thing, and do not let two days elapse without writing. You will thus prove that you have as much friendship for me as I for you.

I think of starting on my return journey about the middle of next week. Write until I inform you of my departure. Good-bye.

Take care also of my Bengalee,\* and tell me whether it was not parched with thirst when you arrived. Cheer up my poor Emilie,† who often becomes low-spirited. I know you to be kind, full of attention, and obliging.

I depend upon you to fill my place in *all respects*.

AUORE DUDEVANT.

*To THE SAME.*

PERIGUEUX, 8th December, 1829.

MY DEAR JULES,

I have received three letters from you. I wrote this morning to my brother to instruct him to give you my key as often as you may want it. The instructions

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\* A kind of bird, the linnet of Bengal.

† Madame Hippolyte Chatiron, George Sand's sister-in-law.

I gave in that respect on my departure were misunderstood, or, in the confusion of the moment, I possibly explained myself badly. That was, however, my intention, and I beg to apologise. At all events, the key of the large library was, I hope, placed at your disposal, and you were able to read at your leisure. If there has been no fire in your room, that was your fault. It only depended on you to light it, and you are not so stupid, I suppose, as to think that that required discretion.

Give special instructions as regards my *Bengalee*, and see for yourself that it be properly attended to; as, if I find it has been neglected, I shall make a d—— of a row with André.\* Tell my people to light a fire every day in my little *study*, so that on re-entering it, at the end of this week, I may not find it as cold as ice. Remind my brother also to often exercise *Liska*.†

I began by what I meant to end with; but I did well, for we are apt to forget the little things which we put off, and important ones do not so urgently require to be called to mind, as we seldom forget them. Let us speak of my children. I understand you to say that my daughter has caught a cold. If it should become any worse, please to prepare for her a potion of milk and almonds (that is a little talent which I know you possess), which you will make her drink at night; you might add to it a few drops of essence of orange blossom, and half an ounce of syrup of gum arabic. So Maurice is beginning to read well! I am quite pleased to hear it; that is why I write to him. I cannot say any more, time is pressing.

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\* A man-servant belonging to the house.

† George Sand's riding mare.

My health keeps good, and, moreover, I feel in a humour to sing the *Nunc Dimittis*. You do not know what that means, you heretic? I shall teach it to you. Good evening. Thanks for your exactitude, thanks heartily. Nothing is so sweet to me as to receive news from my dear family. Take every care of my Maurice.

Good-bye, do not write any more. I shall start immediately.

AUORE DUDEVANT.

*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN, Paris.*

NOHANT, 29th December, 1829.

MY DEAR LITTLE MAMMA,

I wish you good health and all the prosperity you may desire throughout the whole of the year upon which we are about to enter, and all through your life; I hope that you will manage to see many years yet. With that object in view, you must take care of yourself and lead a joyous life. . . .

What are you doing with my husband? Does he take you to the theatre? is he cheerful? is he good-tempered? He informed us that he would be back this week; but I doubt whether his business engagements will enable him to keep his promise. Take advantage of his arm while you have got him; make him laugh, for he is always as sad as an owl all the time he is in Paris. Seize the opportunity of his being with you to go about, if the weather permits. Here we are buried in snow like marmots. We spend our time in warming ourselves and talking

nonsense. We do nothing, and yet the days seem too short. Hippolyte seems to possess an inexhaustible source of gaiety and fun; his wife is pretty well, and our children occupy all our thoughts. They read to perfection. Hippolyte is writing master; as for myself, I teach music.

My daughter is not quite so forward, but she begins to speak English and to walk. She has a nurse who speaks English and Spanish to her. If she could go on in that way she would learn several languages without any trouble. But I am not satisfied with Miss Pepita (that is the name of the governess), and I scarcely know whether I shall keep her. She is as dirty and lazy as a true Castilian. As for my little Solange,\* she is quite fresh and well. She will, I believe, be very pretty; people say that she bears a likeness to Maurice; she has at any rate what he does not possess, a complexion as white as snow. At this time of the year, it is not possible to find a more seasonable companion.

Good-bye, dear little mamma; my fingers are quite numbed. I kiss you tenderly and leave the pen to Hippolyte.

AURORE.

*To THE SAME.*

1st February, 1830.

MY DEAR MAMMA,

Had I not received news concerning you by my husband and by my brother, who has just arrived, I should feel anxious about your health; for you have been a long time without writing. For the last few days I have

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\* George Sand's daughter.



intended to scold you for it. A serious alarm respecting Maurice's health prevented me from carrying out my intentions.

For several days I felt extremely miserable. Fortunately assiduous care, leeches, and poultices allayed the crisis. The dear boy recovered even more rapidly than I dared to expect. He is now well again and has resumed his lessons, which constitute an important occupation for me. So much so, that I can scarcely dispose of a few hours each day to take a little exercise and play with my little Solange, who is as handsome as a cherub, white as a swan, and meek as a lamb. She had a foreign nurse, who might have proved most useful to her for acquiring languages, but turned out such a worthless individual in all respects that, after much misplaced indulgence, I resolved to dismiss her this morning, for having taken Maurice (scarcely recovering from the consequences of his dreadful indigestion) to the village, where she stuffed him with warm bread and country wine.

I have entrusted Solange to the care of André's wife, who has been with me for the last two years. I send you Maurice's portrait, which I attempted the very evening when he fell ill. I dare not say that the likeness is very striking. I scarcely had time to look at him, as he fell asleep in his chair. That I then ascribed to want of sleep, his being, as I thought, tired of playing, whereas in reality it was caused by latent headache and fever. Since then, I have refrained from *making him sit*, afraid as I have been of causing him any fatigue.

While touching up the sketch, I did my best to call to mind his physiognomy, full of fun and decision. I believe

that I succeeded in catching the expression of his face; the only fault being that the portrait makes him appear a year or two older than he is. The distance between the nostrils and the eye is a little exaggerated, and the mouth is not sufficiently curled in the style of my own. By picturing to yourself those features brought a little more closely together, very long eye-lashes, of which a drawing can only give an imperfect idea, and which impart much pleasantness to the look, very lively pink colour with a complexion which is neither dark nor fair, but intermediate, the pupils of an orange-black hue, that is, of not so fine a black as your own, though almost as large; in short, by taxing your imaginative powers, you may form an idea of his little face, which, as time wears on, will be I believe rather handsome than pretty.

His waist is free from defects—slender, straight as a palm tree, supple and graceful; his feet and hands are very small; his temper is a little hasty, a little self-willed and obstinate. But his heart is excellent, and his intellect quite susceptible of being developed. He reads fluently, and begins to write; he has also begun music, orthography, and geography. The last is a pleasure to him.

All this is mother's twaddle; but you will not find fault with me, for you know what it is. As for myself, my lessons are my sole preoccupation, and to them I have sacrificed all my former pleasures. Now is the time when all my care and attention become necessary. A boy's education is no small matter, and must not be neglected. I am, more than ever, delighted to live in the country, where I can devote myself entirely to teaching.

I do not regret the pleasures of Paris. I am very fond when I am there of going to the play and to the races; but,

thank goodness, I also can give up thinking of them when I am away from there, and thus unable to indulge in them. But there is one thing to which I do not so easily make up my mind. It is being away from you, to whom I should be so delighted to introduce my children, and whom I should so lovingly surround with care and happiness. You grieve me very much by always denying me the means of fulfilling a duty which I should deem so sweet to perform. I scarcely dare to press you myself, for fear of being unable to offer you here the distractions which you find in Paris, and which the country cannot provide. Yet I feel inwardly convinced that if affection and attention will suffice to make life agreeable to you, you would enjoy the existence which I should like to create here for you.

Good-bye, my dear mamma. We all, big and small, kiss you. You must write to me! It is not sufficient for me to learn that you are in good health; I want you to say so yourself, and to give me your blessing.

AURORE.

*TO THE SAME.*

NOHANT, *February, 1830.*

MY DEAR LITTLE MAMMA,

I received your letter a few days since, and would have answered it at once but for a fresh indisposition, which turned out rather serious and brought me rather low. I must seriously think of putting myself in a state of grace, a thing which people always delay as long as they can, so long indeed that I can scarcely believe it serves any useful purpose.

"These," you will say, "are fine sentiments!" You know that I am joking, and that, whether ill or in good health, I am always the same from a moral point of view; my gaiety is not even altered by the state of my health. I take time as it comes, depending on the future, on my physical strength, on the desire which I feel of living lonely in order to love and nurse you.

Happily you are still young, and may yet long lead a single life; but a day will come, my dear mother, when you will no longer possess such fine eyes or such good teeth; you will then be compelled to come back to us. By the fireside at Nohant, that is where I shall expect you then, wrapped up in warm blankets, and teaching the children of Maurice and Solange to read. I shall not be very nimble then myself, and if my poor unsettled health allows me to see those days, I shall not refuse to instal myself at the other corner. We shall then tell each other some fine stories, which will never end, and will send us alternately to sleep. I shall, myself, be much older than my age, for, owing to the dose of sciatica and of pain which already weighs me down, I could vouch that you feel younger than I do.

Therefore, depend on it, dear mother, we shall grow old together, and come exactly to the same point. May we end likewise, and start in company on the same day, for that place yonder!

Good-bye, dear mamma, I leave the pen to Hippolyte; I cannot write without tiring a good deal. The mad-brain will take upon himself to give you an account of our amusements.

AURORE.

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN, Châteauroux.*

NOHANT, 1st March, 1830.

MY DEAR BOY,

I fancied that you had forgotten us. I am glad to have made a mistake. You would be most ungrateful were you not to acknowledge the sincere friendship which I displayed towards you, and of which you seemed deserving. I believe, indeed, that you acknowledge it, since you say so, and I feel the simple and affectionate manner in which you express your affection.

You congratulate yourself upon having met with a friend in me. Friends are a comfort, but they are very rare! If you do not change, if you always remain as I saw you here—that is, honest, meek, frank, full of love for your excellent mother, respecting old age, and not amusing yourself by railing at it, as is now the prevalent fashion; if, in short, you do not fall into the errors which you saw me detest and fight against in my most intimate friends—you may rely on that thorough motherly friendship which I promise to bestow on you.

But I warn you that I shall expect more from you than from others. There are many people whose bad education, the want of a guide in life, or ardent temper may be alleged as excuses. With good principles, a peaceful nature, a virtuous mother, we do not deserve any indulgence if we allow ourselves to get corrupted. I know your qualities and your defects better than you do yourself. At your age people do not know themselves. They have not left years enough behind them to understand the past, and to judge of a portion of life. They only think of the time before them, and see it quite different from what it will be!

I am going to describe you as you are. First of all, apathy is dominant in you. Yours is a *nonchalant* constitution. You do not lack aptitudes; your studies were good. Were you not lazy, I believe that you might some day have a "square" head, as Napoleon used to say, a positive mind and solid instruction. But you are lazy. In the second place, your temper is not kind enough as a rule, though it is too kind at times. You are either taciturn to excess, or trusting to a fault. You should try to find a medium.

You will observe that those reproaches are not addressed to my boy, to the one with whom I used to read and chat in my study, and who, in my society, was always sensible and excellent. I speak of Jules Boucoiran, whom others judge, and of whom they may feel satisfied or have to complain. As I wish that all those with whom you meet may form a correct idea of you, and as I also desire to teach you to live in good relations with all, I must point out to you the disadvantage of that want of reserve with which you give in to the feelings of the moment—now effusion and impulse, and now indifference.

You dislike solitude. In order to escape from a society antipathetic to you, you frequent worse. I learned that during my absence you spent all your evenings in the kitchen, and that I cannot approve.

You know whether I am proud, and whether I treat my servants with haughtiness. Brought up with them, accustomed, for fifteen years, to consider them like companions, to "thee" and "thou" them, to play with them as Maurice does now with Thomas,\* I even now often countenance their

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\* Thomas Aucante, cowherd at the farm at Nohant.

rebuking and almost ruling me. I do not treat them like servants. A friend of mine observed, with much reason, that they were not valets, but rather a special class of people who, by taste, had engaged themselves to keep my house in order, though living as free, as much *at home* as myself. )

You are also aware that I sometimes take a seat in my kitchen, while watching the chicken roasting for dinner, and giving audience to my rascally servants and to my beggars. But I should not stay a quarter of an hour in their midst when they are together, to spend my time listening to their conversation. It would annoy and disgust me; because their education is different from mine; I should stand in their way, and at the same time find myself out of place. You were brought up like me, not like them. You must therefore not behave with them as an equal. I press that rebuke, of which I should not have thought, had not something similar come to my knowledge by mere chance.

Hippolyte, travelling one day in a public conveyance, met with a man employed at General Bertrand's, whether in the capacity of labourer, valet, or agriculturist I do not know. The latter indulged in much gossip, spoke about the Bertrand family, the master, his lady, their children, etc., etc., . . . and, finally, of M. Jules: "He is a very nice fellow," said he, "and quite a scholar, but he is young and does not know how to hold his rank. He plays at cards or at draughts with the general's footman. We common folk do not approve of that; had we been brought up as gentlemen, we should behave as such."

Hippolyte related that conversation to me, regarding it as quite groundless; but I recollected various circumstances

which led me to give it credence; among others, your quarrel with the porter's family, a quarrel which ought never to have taken place, because you should never have associated with people devoid of education.

I here again repeat it, education sets up the only real distinction between men. I do not understand any other; but that one seems to me undeniable. The education which you received imposes upon you the obligation of living with persons of the same standing, and displaying towards others only meekness, kindness, and a readiness to oblige them. As for intimacy and confidence, those feelings ought never to exist between you and such people, except in exceptional circumstances, which could not prevail in your intercourse with my people or with those of General Bertrand. That is why I say that you are careless.

When your pupils are in bed, instead of going to talk nonsense with people who do not speak the same French as yourself, you should take up a book and adorn your mind with those branches of knowledge with which it is still unacquainted! If your brain is tired with the fits of impatience and the monotony of tuition, than which nothing, I will admit, is more irksome, take up a work on literature. There are hundreds of such works with which you are either unacquainted or imperfectly conversant! I would prefer to see you writing bad verse even than going to hear ante-room prose.

You see that I am taking full advantage of the privilege that you gave me of scolding you. At all events, if you should not take it kindly, you would be a fool; for in this I am only fulfilling my duty as a mother, and it requires much affection and much esteem for you to undertake to give you such a sharp lecture.



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13th March.

It is close upon a fortnight since I wrote you the foregoing scribble. Since then it has not been possible for me to resume. It is only with much difficulty that I again take up the pen to-day. I caught a kind of cold which much injured my sight. I shall be much to be pitied if compelled to warm my feet without being able to follow any occupation ; it is a sad thing when the sight gets bad, and one can discern neither the colour of the sky nor the features of one's children. You must pray that such a misfortune may not befall me.

In the meantime, I suffer much, and can only say that I hope that you will not feel vexed at the foregoing remarks, though rather severe in their expression. See in them but a fresh proof of my affection for you.

You will come and see us when you have done with the Bertrand family. You will find Maurice and Léontine very fluent readers, dreadful scribblers, but on the whole making pretty fair progress with respect to the little things which I gradually teach them. Soulat\* reads very badly, but writes pretty well. He forgets the rules that you gave him, although we make him read every day.

You proposed to let me have some tables intended to bring back to the children's minds the principles of your excellent method, which are often required. You afterwards forgot all about them. I remember pretty well the consideration of the chief rules. But my head and sight are so weak that you would do me a favour by sending them.

Good-bye, my dear Jules ; do not forget to write. Everybody here begs to be remembered.

Maurice sends his love.

AUORE DUDEVANT.

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\* Jacques Soulat, ex-grenadier in the Imperial Guards, settled as easant in the village of Nohant.

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN, Châteauroux.*

NOHANT, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1830.

I am very pleased with your letter, my dear boy. First of all, I want to tell you to come and see me before going back to Paris. You must even do your best to spend some time with us. The children write well enough now to profit by the method of spelling which you mentioned to me. Will you not try it with them? You know what pleasure you will do me by accepting my proposal.

You acknowledge all your faults so readily that I cannot scold you much. But to confess a fault is only halfway towards mending it. We must therefore set to work and rid ourselves of it as soon as we can. In your previous letter you threw doubts on my patience.

You are scarcely mistaken. I possess an inexhaustible amount of it in regard to certain obstacles and as to physical suffering; but, with Maurice, I lose it all; although that indeed is the case for which I should reserve the most. I take his progress so much to heart that I quickly despair, which is quite wrong of me. Like yourself, I used to say that that disposition of mine proceeded from my temperament, from the climate, from digestive disorders, etc. Yet that would be a very poor excuse indeed, since in numerous instances I have succeeded in mastering the violence of my temper. That which we have been able to do once we can do again, and habit enables us to do it almost at all times. I hope that I shall come to that with my fits of impatience, in like manner as you will yourself with your apathy. Meekness is indispensable to me if I would do something with my son;

you yourself want a stimulant in order to do something with yourself. Maurice's education is only beginning; yours is not finished. If you do not object to it, I shall give you your task when you are here, and I authorise you to laugh at me whenever I fly into a passion. But I have improved myself very much already.

The second paragraph of your letter is not very clear. You promise to explain it in a year's time. So much the better!

The third is an argument, if you like. You will only need to read it over again to ascertain its solidity. You say: "I am frank, because I let people see when I feel displeased with them. I abhor dissimulation, and were I to act otherwise I should be a hypocrite." Those are indeed ideas of a head twenty years old! Do you think me false and perfidious? Do you think that I have not many times in my life experienced towards some people feelings of estrangement and indignation? Of course I have; but before giving expression to my feelings I have reflected.

I have asked myself what might be the cause of my aversion, and in the majority of cases I concluded that my own vanity led me to overrate the difference existing between me and others, my usurped superiority over them. I do not speak of the murderers and thieves whom I have had the honour of *associating* with. I leave them apart. There are many reasons why they should be excused and pitied, but it is useless to mention them here. I certainly allow you to consider such men with horror, provided that your indignation does not make you inexorable and inhuman towards those degraded specimens of our kind, to which we should still hold out a helping hand, so that they may not degrade

themselves still more. I only allude here to those *foibles*, and even to those vices to be met with in society, in every society, with the sole difference that they are more or less veiled.

If you were not so young, if you were more used to meet with such people at almost every step (that is what is called *experience*); if you considered *everything* when judging them, you would not be so severe upon them, though not ceasing to be strictly virtuous yourself.

Remember that you are only twenty years old, and that most people whose failings may shock you have lived three or four times as long as yourself; have undergone trials the issue of which, if ever you were subjected to them, you could not even foresee; have perhaps been deprived of all means of salvation, of all good examples, of all help likely to bring them back to the right path or preserve them from doing wrong. How do you know whether, placed as they were, you might not have done worse? Consider, therefore, what man is when left to himself.

Examine yourself strictly and attentively for only a single day! You will perceive what movements of miserable vanity, of ruthless and foolish pride, of unjust selfishness, of cowardly envy, of stupid presumption, are inherent to our abject nature! how scarce are good impulses! how frequent and habitual the bad ones! It is habit which prevents our perceiving them; and, because of our not giving way to them, we believe that we do not experience them. Then ask yourself whence you derive the power of repressing them; power which with you has become a habit, and whose struggle is only apparent in exceptional cases. "From my experience," I hear you reply. "From my principles."

Do you imagine that those principles would have grown in

you but for the care which your mother and all those who worked for your education took to inculcate you with them? And you forget now that it is they who are entitled to be blessed and thanked, and not you, whose moral qualities are the result of their care and solicitude! You ought rather, therefore, to feel compassion for those who have been denied the help of a guide through life, and who, abandoned to their own impulse, have gone astray, not knowing where they were going to. Do not associate with them, for their society is always unpleasant and perhaps baneful at your age; but do not hate them. After careful consideration you will perceive that that kindly feeling, commonly termed *amiableness*, does not consist in deceiving men, but in forgiving them.

I have nothing to say as regards the remainder of your letter. I told you all I thought about it in my last. You agree with me that you are in the wrong, and you promise to change your excess of benevolence for a nobler meekness, whose value will be better appreciated. I can detect some very good elements in you; but there is often a want of soundness in your arguments. It is a great fault in any one to encourage self-delusion.

Good-bye, my dear boy. I am expecting you; come as soon as you can. My sight is improving. The children and myself send our love. Always rely on your old friend.

AUORE.

*To THE SAME, Paris.*

LA CHATRE, 31st July, 1830, 11 o'clock p.m.

Yes, my boy, yes, do write. I thank you for having thought of me in the midst of all those horrors. O Lord! what bloodshed! what tears!

Your letter, dated 28th, only came to hand to-day, the 31st. We were waiting for news with such anxiety! We were, however, already acquainted with almost all the particulars it contains through various channels, and all the rumours seem to differ but little. But we are as yet without an official version! We hope that it will come to-morrow; for we need it, in order to co-operate to the best of our limited ability in the grand deed of renovation. But, Lord! shall we carry the day? Will the blood of all those victims profit their wives and children?

Your letter has been read by the whole town, for people are craving for news, and everybody furnishes his contribution to it; write, and recollect that news is eagerly awaited, but only speak of public topics. Poor boy, despite the fusillade and the barricades, you succeeded in informing me of what was going on. Believe me, of all those whose fate excites my apprehension, you are not among those in whom I am least interested. Do not expose yourself, unless it be to save a friend; for I should then tell you, as I would my own son: "Risk your life rather than desert him." For Heaven's sake, if you can go about without danger, make inquiries respecting all those who are dear to me.

Did anything happen to the Saint Agnans? The father is serving in the National Guards. We are compelled to put to ourselves such questions as this: "Is So-and-so dead?" Three days ago we should have been stunned at hearing of the death of a friend; to-day we might learn that twenty of them had been killed, perhaps on the same day, and yet could not weep over them. On such occasions the blood runs feverishly, and the heart is too much oppressed to express its feelings.

I experience an energy which I did not believe I possessed.

Events help to develop the soul. Were anybody to warn me that to-morrow I shall get my head broken, I should all the same sleep to-night; but the heart bleeds for others. Ah! how I envy your fate! You have no children! You are alone; but I, I am like a she-wolf watching over her cubs. If my dear little ones were threatened, I should risk being cut to pieces in their defence.

But what was I going to tell you? My thoughts are affected by the general disorder. Run to the "Hôtel D'Elbœuf," on the Place du Carrousel. It has probably been pillaged. Inquire whether my aunt, Madame Maréchal, and family, were spared on those days of bloodshed. My uncle was inspector of the King's household. I trust that he was absent. But his wife and daughter, left alone to face the storm! His son-in-law was brigadier in the body-guards; is he dead? If not, will he be alive to-morrow? I have not the courage to write to them. And if, as I fear, they have been ill-treated, they can scarcely dare to write themselves. You, my boy, who are active, kind, and devoted to your friends, you may perhaps allay my dreadful anxiety. Do so by all means, if, as we hear, the struggle is over. Alas! will it not soon break out again?

Let me tell you what took place here. Our town is the only one which displays any energy. Who would have thought it? It has risen in insurrection. Châteauroux is less determined. As for Issoudun, it is hesitating; nevertheless, the National Guards are being organised, and, if the authorities (that is, the authorities that were) make any attempt at fighting, we shall resist them. For the present the *gendarmerie* is the only force available to oppose us; it is so few in number compared with the insurgents, that it

prudently keeps quiet. There is only one danger for us, that of being assailed by a regiment detailed from Bourges to crush us. In that case a struggle will be inevitable.

Casimir has been appointed lieutenant in the National Guards, and 120 men have already joined. We are awaiting with impatience the course of the provisional Government. I fear, but I do not say anything, for it is not for myself that I fear. In the meantime there are meetings, where people mutually excite one another.

What do you intend to do yourself? Is the Bertrand family coming here soon? Do you still contemplate accompanying it? I am very desirous of seeing you again.

Give us some news of our deputy; did he reach Paris in safety? We saw him start at a very perilous moment, and trembled at the idea of what might befall him. We now hope that he entered the capital without any mishap, yet we are anxious to know it for a certainty. Try to see him, and request him, if he has a moment's leisure, to write a few lines to me. He is our hero, and, as our attachment to him is his only recompense, he cannot refuse.

Good-bye, my dear boy; where is the time when we used to read peacefully together? Where are our quiet days of rest? When will they come again? War is not my element; but, here below, we must be *amphibious*. Would that the sacrifice of my life and property could suffice to secure liberty! I should gladly give up both! But I cannot resign myself to see others shedding their blood and we swimming in it. You are fortunate in being a man; in you, indignation is a diversion against grief. Thanks once more for your letter.

Do not cease to furnish us with detailed information. I do not believe that anything happened to my mother, although



the poor woman must have felt quite upset with fright! See her, pray; she resides close to you—No. 6, Boulevard Poissonnière. Do not be surprised at the way she will receive you; she has the odd mania of looking upon all strangers as thieves. Shout out to her as you go in that you call on my behalf to hear how she is, and do not mind if she should be cool to you. I shall be grateful to you for that fresh favour. Adieu.

*To THE SAME, Châteauroux.*

NOHANT, 27th October, 1830.

I thank you, my dear boy, for your two notes. I suspected that the rumours which reached us concerning Issoudun must have been exaggerated. It is so with all public news, regular political gossip, which increases in importance as it spreads through the world.

There is always in truth something trivial, not to the taste of poetic spirits. We are, besides, in the classical land of poetry, where people never speak of things as they are. If they see pigs, they call them elephants; by them geese are spoken of as princesses, and so on. I am sick and tired of all this; that is why I have given up reading the newspapers. I hate the gossiping spirit of provincial coteries; it is a war of lies, a storming of absurdities which give the heartache to those whose hearts are still capable of feeling. Outside of my private life, I do not know of anything deserving of real interest.

In our days, enthusiasm is the virtue of dupes. Ours is an age of iron, of selfishness, of cowardice, and deceit, when

people must either rail or weep for fear of being considered as fools or as wretches. You know what I have decided to do ; I devote my life to the objects of my affection. I surround myself with them as with a *sacred phalanx*, which dispels black and despondent thoughts. Absent or present, my friends fill my soul ; their remembrance brings joy to it, and blunts the sharp point of poignant and often recurring griefs. The morrow brings back with the sunbeam a ray of hope. I then laugh at my tears.

You often wonder at my unstable humour, at my supple character. What would become of me were I not gifted with that faculty of shaking off my own thoughts? You are acquainted with all the events of my life, and ought to understand that, but for that happy disposition, thanks to which grief does not leave a lasting impression upon me, I should be always wrapped up in my thoughts, incapable of any service to others, unmoved by their affection.

But, thank goodness ! it is not so. The faculty which I possess of forgetting my troubles inspires me with so much gratitude, brings me so many consolations, that I am proud to say to those who love me : " You bring me back happiness and gaiety, you make up for what I miss, in you my whole ambition is satisfied." Take your share of this compliment, my dear boy, for you know that I love you like a son and a brother.

Our characters differ, but our hearts are honest and affectionate, therefore they are made to understand each other. I shall be delighted to entrust my Maurice to your care, and to see you prolong your stay here. I am longing for your coming.

Good night, my boy, write to me.

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*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN, Charleville.*

NOHANT, 22nd November, 1830.

**MY DEAR LITTLE MAMMA,**

How lazy you are ! Were I not aware of your being in trustworthy hands, and quite safe at Charleville, I should feel uneasy about you. In these times it is difficult to vouch for people's safety. There are riots everywhere; even our part of the country, usually so peaceful and quiet, has had its rising. Some rather serious rioting took place at Bourges, at Issoudun, and even at La Châtre; but in the last-mentioned town the rising was quickly suppressed, and everything ended ludicrously. Nevertheless, many people fled for fear; everything in life has its ludicrous side.

I feel very little disposed to fear the rather black future which is being predicted for us. Fright exaggerates everything; and those bloodthirsty men, when closely examined, turn out to be, in the majority of cases, but a set of drunkards whom a few glasses of wine will make jolly, and who do not mean to kill anybody. They make a great deal of noise, but do very little harm, whatever may be said to the contrary; at all events, I am very glad to know that you are not in Paris. When in the capital you are quite isolated, and in that position it is only natural that people should not feel reassured. Fear is injurious; it makes people ill. You must therefore rest in the society of your children; and do not forget the absent, but speak a little oftener about yourself and them.

Is Oscar at college? Does Caroline's health improve? Your presence, which she so anxiously desired, must have been for her the best of remedies; and the fine weather which

we are enjoying is capital for delicate chests. Take every care of her, she will repay it all; though I trust that you will manage not to require it.

I have been rather poorly since my last letter. I run about all day long to drive away the worry of my sufferings.

As for my sister-in-law,\* she does not run much, I might even say that she never does so at all. She is a kind and meek creature, having no will of her own; she gets up late, and we only see each other at dinner-time, always then with pleasure and good understanding. We spend the evenings together; short evenings they are, for she retires to her room at nine, and I go and write or draw in my study, while my two darlings indulge in a snoring match. Solange is superbly fat and fresh. I am rather doubtful about her ever being pretty: her mouth is big and her forehead rather projecting; but her eyes are lovely, her nose quite small, and her skin like satin. I think that she will grow to be a buxom *Berrichon* lass.

Maurice is fond of study. He writes pretty correctly, and his temper is greatly improving. Léontine is also very nice; in short, our life in common is very pleasant, but I fear that we shall soon have to separate. Hippolyte has been for the last few days in Paris, where he was to spend a fortnight and then come back; he now informs us that he will, for the present, have to stay there altogether, being obliged to join the National Guard. The frequent outbreaks which take place in Paris compel those troops to display much activity. It is a manly duty to join the corps in times of effervescence and civil disorders. He saw Pierret, who has just been thirty hours on duty and was exhausted.

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\* Madame Hippolyte Chatiron.

If my brother should find it impossible to come back to us this winter, his wife will probably wish to join him. I should view such a separation with much regret; habit has made us already necessary to one another; at least, this is how I feel for my own part; it is with me a necessity to become attached to those who surround me.

Excuse my gossip and my smudge. By-the-bye, do you still occupy your leisure in painting, a pleasant pastime in which you are so proficient? The word *smudge*, which comes in after a rather impertinent *by-the-bye*, only applies to myself. I paint flowers which look like pumpkins, but it amuses me all the same.

Good-bye, my dear little mother; I kiss you with all my heart. Emilie, my husband, and the children send their love, and request you to remember them to Caroline, Oscar and Cazamajou.

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN, Paris.*

NOHANT, *Wednesday, 3rd December, 1830.*

MY DEAR BOY,

If you were fond of compliments I should tell you that your letter is truly remarkable as regards judgment, observation, argumentation, and even style; but, as it is, you would send me to Jericho.

I will therefore simply tell you that your remarks seem perfectly just. I feel much confidence in the judgment which you give in trembling, and without any confidence in it yourself.

. . . Happen what may, I thank you for your information, and will acquaint you with whatever may occur. I will not

say any more on this subject, for I have something much more important to tell you.

I must give you a piece of news, wonderful, amazing, surprising . . . (for the adjectives, see Madame de Sévigné's letter, for which I do not much care, whatever other people may think of it!). I must inform you that, in spite of my inertia, indifference, unsteadiness of purpose, the facility with which I forgive and forget sorrows and injury, I have just taken a *rash and extreme resolution*. This is no laughing matter, despite the tone of waggishness which I assume. It is a matter of the utmost gravity. It is in fact one of those secrets which it is not safe to divulge to more than one person. You are acquainted with my home life, you are able to judge whether it is tolerable. You, scores of times, wondered how I could display so much courage and equanimity when my pride was being constantly crushed. But there is a limit to everything. Besides, the reasons which might have led me to take earlier the determination upon which I now have decided, were not strong enough to influence my resolution, previous to the fresh events which have just taken place. Nobody is aware of anything. There has been no scandal. While looking for something in my husband's desk, I simply found a parcel addressed to me. That parcel had a kind of solemn appearance which struck me. It bore the inscription: *To be opened only at my death*.

I could not find the patience to wait until I became a widow. With health like mine, I cannot expect to survive any one. At any rate, I supposed my husband dead, and felt rather anxious to know what he might think of me while still alive. The parcel being directed to me, I had

a right to open it without being thought indiscreet, and, as my husband is in the full enjoyment of health, I could read his will without emotion.

Good heavens! what a will! Curses for me and nothing else! He had collected therein all his impulses of temper and ill-humour against me, all his reflections respecting my *perverseness*, all his feelings of contempt for my character. And that is what he had left me as a token of his affection! I fancied that I was dreaming, I who, until now, was obstinately shutting my eyes and refusing to see that I was scorned. The perusal of that will has at last aroused me from my slumber. I said to myself that to live with a man who feels neither esteem for nor confidence in his wife, would be equivalent to trying to revive a corpse. My mind was made up and, I dare say so, *irrevocably*. You know that I am most careful in the use of that expression.

Without delaying a single day, though weak and sickly still, I informed him of my decision and enumerated my motives for so acting, with a cold-blooded audacity which petrified him. He scarcely expected that a being like me could muster enough spirit and nerve to thwart his designs. He scolded, rebuked, and entreated me. I remained unshakeable. *I must have an alimony. I shall go to Paris, my children shall stay at Nohant.* Such was the result of our first explanation. I pretended to be intractable on all points. It was mere feigning on my part, as you can easily fancy. I have no desire to forsake my children. When he became convinced of this, he became as meek as a lamb. He told me that he would let his Nohant estate, dismiss everybody, take Maurice with him to Paris, and

put him in a college. That is another thing to which I object; the boy being still too young and delicate. On the other hand, I do not wish servants who saw me born, and whom I love almost as much as friends, to leave my house. I agree to reduce the expenses of my house, as my modest income will necessitate economy on my part. I shall keep Vincent\* and André,† with their wives, and Peter.‡ I shall have to be satisfied with a couple of horses, two cows, etc., etc.; I spare you the enumeration of this medley. In this manner I shall be supposed to lead a separate life. I intend spending part of the year, six months at least, at Nohant with my children, and even my husband, whom this lesson will teach circumspection. Up to the present he has treated me as though I were hateful to him. Being assured of it, I go. Now, he cries over me; that is his own fault! I give him the proof that I do not wish to be borne as a burden, but sought for and hailed as a free companion, who will again share his roof only when he becomes worthy of her.

Do not think me impertinent. Remember the humiliation which I have had to endure! it lasted for eight years! You certainly often remarked it yourself: the weak are the dupes of society. I believe my courage and firmness were called forth by your remarks. My anger only subsided to-day. I said that I would consent to come back if my conditions were accepted, which, of course, they will be.

But those terms still depend upon somebody; have you not guessed whom? Yourself, my friend; and I confess that I dare not make the request, being afraid of not succeeding in the attempt. Still, you see my position: with

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\* Coachman.

† Valet.

‡ Gardener.



you at Nohant, I can breathe freely and sleep in security; my child will be in safe hands, his education will progress, his health be looked after, his temper not spoiled either by the want of control or by excessive severity. Through you I should learn every day those particulars concerning him which a mother so much delights to read. If I leave my son in the hands of his father, he will be spoiled one day, roughly treated the next, always neglected, and I shall only find him a naughty little boy. When writing to me, the father will always pretend that my son is unwell, in order to rouse my anxiety and prompt me to return.

If such were to be his fate, I should prefer to bear up with mine, bad as it is to-day, and remain with him so as to check his father's brutality.

On the other hand, my husband is certainly not amiable, nor is amiability the chief quality of Madame Bertrand; but people tolerate in a woman what they would not suffer in a man, therefore, will you for three summer months and three winter months (that is how I intend to divide my time), for the sake of my son's interests—that is, for the sake of my own rest and happiness—make the sacrifice of putting up with a dull, cold, and wearisome home? Can you take upon yourself to be deaf to sour words and indifferent to sullen looks? It must be acknowledged that my husband has truly modified his views concerning you, and this year did not give you any cause of complaint; but, even with people whom he loves best, he is sometimes very sulky. Alas! I dare not entreat you to comply with my request, whereas the Bertrands, wealthy and to-day in a brilliant position, offer you a thousand advantages and a residence in Paris, where they are probably going to

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settle, owing to the general's appointment as head of the Polytechnic School.

What shall I do if you refuse? Yet what right have I to insist upon your deciding in my favour? What have I done for you, and what am I to you, to expect you to render me a service such as nobody else would? No, I dare not beg you to do it, and yet I should bless you if you complied with my request. All my life would be devoted to thank and love you as the person to whom I should owe the most. If profound gratitude, a mother's affection, can repay you for such a worthy deed, you will not regret having sacrificed, as it were, two years of your life to me. My heart is not cold, you know that, and I feel that it will not fail to carry out its obligations.

Good-bye; let me have your reply by return of post; that is really most important as regards my line of conduct towards my husband. If you abandon me, I shall have to bend and once more submit to him. Ah! and how he would take advantage of me!

Address your letter to the *poste restante*; my correspondence is no longer safe. But, thanks to that precaution, you will be able to write with perfect freedom. Adieu; I kiss you heartily.

*To THE SAME.*

MONDAY EVENING, NOHANT, 8th December, 1830.

MY DEAR BOY,

Let me bless you, and do not try to underrate the value of what you are doing for me. Do not say that in this you are only fulfilling an agreement, keeping a promise. As

the fresh troubles which have befallen me compel me to leave Nohant during part of the year, you are free from all ties. You could tell me : " I sacrificed my interests, as also my ambition, for the prospect of living with a friend ; but I did not bind myself to watch over her children in her absence, and put up with the wearisomeness of loneliness during one half of the year." When I proposed to you a position, though less brilliant, perhaps more agreeable than the one which you now enjoy, I did not foresee the circumstances wherein I now find myself. I said to myself that my friendship would make up in your eyes for the advantages of fortune, and I knew you sufficiently to expect that you would appreciate the quiet comfort which my affection intended to give you. Being now obliged to adopt an extreme resolution, and secure my rest and freedom by residing at Paris for six months in the year, I tremble 'to ask you to devote your time to me. Far from claiming as a right the execution of the promise which you gave me, I am quite prepared to forego it entirely. If your noble conduct towards me is due to considerations of honour on your part, you may resume your freedom of action without losing any of my esteem.

No, my dear boy, I do not wish to owe anything but to your friendship. I will not shirk the gratitude for which I am indebted to you by considering your sacrifice as the fulfilment of a duty. I shall, all my life, look upon it as a proof of affection so great that I can never adequately acknowledge it. I shall always say to myself that it was out of friendly devotion, and not out of scruples of conscience, that you accepted my proposal, modified as it is by my home troubles.

I return you the two letters which you entrusted to me.

I perfectly perceive the pecuniary disadvantages likely to result from your leaving the Bertrands. Nobody will perceive how noble and disinterested your conduct is. Your mother alone will be able to appreciate it. I must confess that I am grieved at the idea that the secret of my home may become known to others besides yourself. I know full well that your mother will keep that secret as jealously as you; but death, that unforeseen and inevitable accident, may strangely alter the destination of writings. My principle is to destroy without delay every paper conveying intelligence whose disclosure might injure or destroy anybody's reputation or happiness. That is the only reason that induced me to urge you to burn my letter. Should you pass it on to your mother, you will, therefore, pray her to do so. You ought, like myself, to understand the usefulness of that precaution. Should anybody but her or yourself find out my husband's faults, I should ever regret having committed them to paper.

As for Madame Saint A——, I scarcely feel surprised to learn of her *officious* intentions towards me. I never was so simple as to put my faith in her; therefore, whatever conduct she may adopt, I shall not feel concerned by it.

I cannot promise anything with regard to the journey to Nîmes. Pecuniary considerations are not the chief reasons for my relinquishing the execution of that project. The expenses connected with such a journey cannot be very great. But I shall henceforth be in a position that will require much prudence in everything I may do. The good understanding which, despite my separation from my husband, I wish to preserve in all that relates to my son, will compel me to act with as much caution when away as when with him. I have already noticed that he does not relish that prospect.

In future I must not give him any legitimate cause of complaint, otherwise all the results of my energy would be lost, and I should have provided weapons against myself.

I also feel quite miserable at not having a farthing of which I can now dispose. Were I in Paris, I could find you money in the course of a day. I would sell my clothes rather than fail to render you a service; but here, what am I to do? I stand in a very delicate position towards my husband. I am in debt to him. That is to say, I have received advances on account of the income he has agreed to pay me. That did not prevent me, on receipt of your letter, requesting from him a fresh advance, which he rather politely, but very decidedly, refused. Pity me, for I never curse my want of order and economy so much as when, owing to it, I feel unable to help friends! If, however, you could not find money elsewhere, I would contrive to borrow some without its being known, although I am already sunk in debt, which I shall repay God alone knows how! Reply to me without delay, *poste restante*, La Châtre.

My domestic embarrassments are clearing up a little. My brother helps me, and offers to place his Paris residence at my disposal until next March. In the meantime he will stay here with his wife. I shall then (that is, in March) come back and spend some time at Nohant, to instal you there. I shall now start for Paris as soon as I feel better. I am still very poorly. If you can spend a day at Châteauroux I shall let you know, in order that we may have a chat when I am passing through that town.

Good-bye, my dear boy; I am yet very weak, but I still possess enough head and heart to appreciate and feel deeply what you are doing for me. Though, with Spartan ruthless-

ness, you may decline my blessings, I will obsess you until death with my thanks and my *ingratitude*. Take it as you like, as says my good old priest.

Good night then, my dear son ; speak of me to your dear mother. Tell her that, though unacquainted with her, I venerate her, or rather that, though having never seen her, I know her quite well. I certainly wish that she knew me, and was aware how dear to me is her son.

*To MAURICE DUDEVANT, Nohant.*

PARIS, January, 1831.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I reached here very tired ! I was obliged to stop for a few hours at Orleans. The post-chaise was very draughty, and I was frozen. I only arrived in Paris at midnight. I was greatly embarrassed as to what to do with my coach, which I could not very well leave in the street all night, as there is no yard in the house where I live. I, at last, bethought myself of the "Hôtel de Narbonne,"\* where I sent it for shelter. I warmed and rested myself, and managed to conclude most satisfactorily a business arrangement which had caused me great anxiety. I am now going to move in my furniture, take some further rest, and return to you, my darling, in a week's time at latest.

Kiss your papa and your big darling† for me. You promised to write at once ; why did you fail to do so, you

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\* George Sand's property at Paris.

† Solange, Maurice's sister.

little rogue? I have not yet had time to see your uncle. I think that I shall see him to-day.

Good-bye, sweet darling. I send you a thousand kisses.

YOUR MOTHER.

What do you wish me to bring you?

*To THE SAME.*

PARIS, 8th January, 1831.

I received your letter, my dear boy. I was quite grieved to learn that you had been ill; you ate too much chocolate, I recollect. You must not eat any more, but take care of yourself. I hope that you will soon write to say that you are quite well again.

Rest assured, my little love, that I also was very sorry to leave you, and shall be very happy to see you again. You know well that I should have preferred to bring you with me rather than come to Paris alone; but you would not have had much amusement here. You would not have been so well as at Nohant, where everybody loves and takes care of you.

Boncoiran, who also loves you well, will soon be with you and teach you your lessons without tiring you. You know full well that he is not a harsh fellow; therefore, you must not fret because of his coming. You know how everybody pets you, and is pleased whenever you are diligent; your papa, and above all your mamma, who would be so happy to see you a good scholar and quite amiable! You must, therefore, be

very good and cheerful ; play, eat, run about to your heart's content, love me well, and write to me.

Good-bye, my dear child ; I send you a thousand kisses.

Tell me all about your little sister, and kiss her for me.

YOUR MAMMA.

*To THE SAME.*

PARIS, 10th January, 1831.

I am very anxious about you, my dear child. You wrote to tell me that you had been ill ; are you not better now ? I shall feel very grieved if I do not hear from you to-day. I want you to write to me punctually twice a week ; if unwell, request your papa or your uncle to write themselves. As for me, I am in good health and go about a great deal ; but, as I work in the evening, I have not as yet been to the play. I called three times upon your grandmamma Dudevant without seeing her. It seems that she often goes out. I left your letter, and will call upon her again to-day.

I have already ascertained the price of your National Guard uniform ; it will be very pretty. I shall add to it a shako with a red plume. I wish you could see the Orleans Hussars. You would like to be dressed as they are. They wear bluish-gray vests, trimmed with black sheep's wool, and red breeches ; their plume is black, and nothing could be more elegant.

I saw M. Blaize,\* who inquired anxiously about you. Tell your papa to inform Madame Decerf that I conveyed her

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\* An artist who, the year before, painted miniature portraits of George Sand and her son.



message. Ask him also to give me some news respecting Madame Duteil. I have as yet no leisure for writing letters. You are the only person to whom I write.

Give my love to your papa, as also to your uncle and aunt. Tell your uncle that while coming down his stairs rather heavily I broke a dozen of the steps. Give a good kiss to your sister from her mamma; does she ever talk about me? And Léontine, how is she getting on? Give me some news of everybody, and remember me to Eugénie, Françoise, etc.

Good-bye, my dear cherub. Write to me, and above all things take care of your health. Be a good boy, and always love your mother, who kisses you a thousand times over.

*To JULES BOUCOIRAN, Châteauroux.*

PARIS, *Wednesday, 13th January, 1831.*

DEAR FRIEND,

At last I am free, but I am far away from my children. When you are with them I shall not be so sad at their absence; I mean to say that anxiety will not be added to my sadness. Thanks, many thanks, dear boy! May God return to your mother all the good which you will do to my son. Talk often to him about me, that he may not forget to love me. When leaving, I left word that you were to occupy whatever room you might choose. If they should not remember, see that you get it on your arrival. I do not speak of the conduct which you should lead towards my husband in order to maintain all necessary good understanding. You are now aware that you must avoid siding with me, or run the risk of being hated; that you must listen to the most unjust

and absurd paradoxes without evincing any disapproval, etc. I know myself that the friendly regard to which you are entitled will not always be displayed towards you. The heart is hardened, and will not soften down for you.

It is important that your authority over Maurice should be great; but you must not appear to dispute that authority with his father. On the contrary, you should affect to adhere to all he may say to you, though you may eventually act as you think fit. Being fickle in his ideas, he does not care whether his advice be followed or not. You must next be very cautious regarding our correspondence. You must bring into play all your natural wisdom. Pray write to me at least once a week, and in case Maurice should be seriously ill, let me know at once. They would not fail to do so themselves, I am sure of it; but they would not mind exaggerating his illness, either to precipitate my return or to grieve me. They have already done me enough injury as it is, often for the sole sake of hurting me. But you will tell me the truth; and should one of my children fall ill I shall entirely follow your advice as regards coming home or staying here. According to the information received from you I shall be anxious or not. I know that you will spare me all anxiety and trouble as long as you can, and that you will not delude me into blind confidence.

I shall write to you at greater length in a few days, to acquaint you with what I am doing here. I am embarking on the stormy ocean of literature. For we must live. I am not rich now, but I am in good health, and, so long as letters from you tell me of your friendship and give me particulars about my son, I shall feel cheerful.

One more word, however, before wishing you good night.

You misunderstood me if you thought that I refused to accompany you to Nîmes because of *proprieties*, of what *public opinion* might have said. *Proprieties* are the rule of people without soul or virtue. *Public opinion* is but a prostitute, that sells herself to those who pay her best. On the other hand, my refusal was not prompted by my desire not to displease my husband. I will explain myself. It was not because of the ill-humour, or of the bitter or sarcastic reproaches which my going to Nîmes might have provoked. You very properly remarked that I braved the humour and bore those reproaches on many other occasions. I will add that I did so in favour of people for whom I cared a great deal less than for yourself. But I refused for your own sake. I do not wish you to become an object of diffidence and aversion which they might seek to keep off. You intend staying more than two years with us? I do not know how long you will stay, but I only wish it were for the whole of life. Therefore, were I to express for you marked preference, special regard, it would be construed. . . . Besides, you know what *in the past* was the result of similar conduct on my part. They taught me to conceal my noblest affections as though they were guilty sentiments. Not wishing to break them off, I will, because of yourself, my dear Jules, resort to a dissimulation which I should disdain for my own sake.

Good-bye, dear boy ; I love you dearly, and will always be your second mother. Write to me as soon as you arrive at Nohant. Tell me how they speak of me there. It is always a good thing to know what other people think of you.

With much love.

*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN, Charleville.*

PARIS, 18th January, 1831.

MY DEAR LITTLE MAMMA,

Friend Pierret read to me this morning the passage in your letter concerning me. I thank you for the desire which you express of seeing me. It is quite reciprocal. I contemplate staying here at least a couple of months, therefore I cannot fail to kiss you this year. I dare not request you to hasten your return for my sake. It might grieve Caroline, who is so delighted to have you with her. She might reproach me with taking you away. Do not believe, as you seem to infer in your letter to our friend Pierret, that I cherish any feeling of jealousy against my sister. That would be very base of me. I should not like to entertain any such feeling even against a person indifferent to me, and still less against my sister.

You wish to know what I came to Paris for. I suppose I came, like everybody else, to enjoy myself and study fine arts, which are only to be found in their splendour here. I visit all the museums; I am taking lessons in drawing, and am so busy with it all that I can scarcely make any call. I have not yet been to Saint Cloud. For several days that trip has already been arranged between Pierret and myself; but has had to be put off on account of the bad weather. I have not yet seen M. de Villeneuve,\* or my friends from the convent. I have no time to make calls; besides, it involves dressing and a lot of ceremony, of which I am weary. It is so long since I went into society that I almost forget all about the formalities of drawing-rooms. I want to live a little for myself. It is high time.

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\* Count René de Villeneuve, George Sand's cousin.

I often receive letters from my little Maurice. He and his sister are quite well. Maurice has an excellent tutor settled with him for at least two years. That security gives me a little more liberty. Not being absolutely indispensable to my boy, I intend coming to Paris oftener than previously, unless I should grow tired of the capital, which might very well happen. But until now it has not been the case, and should I still feel satisfied with my stay, I shall not go home before the beginning of April.

As you will see, dear mamma, I cannot fail to kiss you this winter; for you are not likely to stay away all that time. If, however, that should be the case, I should, on my way back to Nohant, go to Charleville to spend a week with you. That would afford me the pleasure of kissing my sister as well as yourself; but I again say so, I in no wise wish you to leave her for me. You ought to appreciate the delicacy of the feeling which compels me to express with reserve the desire which I have to kiss my dear mamma.

You intend making a present to Maurice? I dare not tell you that it would be better to make two to Oscar. I know the pleasure which giving affords, and I tenderly thank you for Maurice and myself.

*To M. CHARLES DUVERNET, La Châtre.*

PARIS, 19th January, 1831.

MY DEAR COMRADE,

A week ago we decided upon writing to you; but, wishing to combine the wit of four, we had agreed upon writing together—Alphonse,\* Jules,† Pyat,‡ and myself. But

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\* Alphonse Karr.

† Jules Sandeau.

‡ Felix Pyat.

as it is a rather difficult matter to be together all four at once, I made up my mind to begin alone. I must first tell you, my dear friend, that it is very *ridiculous* of you to go back to Nohant just as I leave it. You might easily have postponed your return for one or two months. It would have been lovely to be here all together.

True, we should not have had the banks of the Indre, but the Seine is more wholesome. We should not have had the *Couperies*, but the Tuileries could have replaced them with advantage. We should not have drunk country milk out of rural and coarse bowls, but we should have breathed the balmy air of fried potatoes and apple fritters on the Pont Neuf, which is quite welcome when people have not a penny to pay for a dinner. Could you not quietly murder your corn dealer, in order to come up here to fetch another from Etampes or the neighbourhood? I am in favour of stabbing; it is a method so generally accepted that those who resort to it cannot be blamed.

All joking aside, my good Charlie, we often talk about you, and long for your presence, your cheerful humour, your kind friendship, and your bad puns.

Your cousin, De Latouche, has been very kind to me. Give my thanks to your mother for the help she afforded to me on that *occurrence*. Occurrence is good, is it not? Alas! if your cousin only knew to what heavy blockhead he is rendering a service, he would doubtless rebuke you for having induced him to do so. We had better not say anything about it. In his presence I am charming; I bow most gracefully, I take small pinches of tobacco, spilling as little as I can on his fine white-ground carpet. I do not lean my elbows on my knees, I do not tumble about upon the chairs; in

short, I am quite nice. You have never seen me at all like it.

He patiently listened to the reading of my light productions. The *Gaul*\* had not the strength to carry them. They would have required two donkeys to drag them so far. He told me that they were very, very good, but devoid of common sense. To which I replied: "Quite true." That I must do it all over again. To which I said: "That may be." That I should do well to begin again. To which I retorted: "Enough!"

As for the *Revue de Paris*, the people there were quite affable. We took them a *most extraordinary* article, to which Jules appended his signature, and of which he wrote the best part, for I was quite in a fever. Besides which, I am not like him, acquainted with the *sublime* style of the *Revue de Paris*. The editor thought the article very good, and solemnly promised to secure its insertion. I have resolved to associate Jules with my labours.

I am delighted for the sake of Jules; for that proves that he is likely to succeed. I have resolved to associate him with my labours, or myself with his, as you may please to put it. Be it as it may, he lends me his name, as I do not wish mine to appear, and I will lend him my aid whenever he may require it. Do not divulge the secret of that *literary partnership*. (I truly possess a delightful choice of expressions.) They speak of me so unmercifully at La Châtre (you must be aware of it), that that would be my death-blow.

After all, I care not what they may think. The only opinion which I respect is that of my friends; I can dispense with the appreciation of other people. For, up to the present,

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\* A nickname of M. Alphonse Fleury, of La Châtre.

that appreciation has not, for aught I know, prevented my living without excessive trouble, thanks to God and a few *bipeds* who grant me their affections.

I did not mention Jules to M. de Latouche; his protection is not very easy to obtain, I was told. But for your mamma's recommendation I might vainly have looked for it. I therefore apprehend that he might refuse to extend it to two persons. I told him that *Sandeau* was the name of a countryman of mine who had kindly consented to lend it to me.

In this I was following his advice; for, I may as well tell it you, M. Véron, the chief editor of the *Revue*, hates women, and will not have anything to do with them. He is affected by scrofula.

You must decide whether it is opportune to explain to your mamma why *Sandeau's* name will appear in the *Revue*; you must also ascertain whether she will speak to M. de Latouche about it. It would be best to tell her that Jules lends me his name. When we are strong enough to use our own wings I shall let him have all the honour of the publication, and we shall share the profits (should there be any). For that is the only thing that tempts my material and positive mind. I spend more than my income; I must either earn money or begin to acquire habits of order and economy. But I am so unlikely ever to realise that last alternative, that it is hopeless even to think of it.

I am here for a short time—that is to say, for two or three months; after which I shall go home again, there to work hard at night and ride about all day, according to my sweet habit, to the great scandal and dissatisfaction of our worthy townsfolk. Should they speak ill of me, do not, my dear friend, trouble to defend me. Let them talk.



Quietly warm your feet, wear comfortable slippers, and be philosophical. I am the latter, and possess the former; and, above all, even though it should be a subject of slander for people, I entertain for you an old and sincere friendship. I am not of those who sacrifice their friends to their enemies.

Good evening, comrade; I embrace you.

*To MAURICE DUDEVANT, Nohant.*

PARIS, 25th January, 1831.

MY DEAR BOY,

You must have received a letter from me one or two days after that which you wrote to me. Tell your papa to send me some money. As soon as he does so, I shall send your National Guard uniform. I several times saw your grand-mamma Dudevant. She did not say anything about money, and I do not care to ask her for any. You must tell your papa all about that. I now only possess what is absolutely necessary for my own use, and cannot afford an outlay of about fifty francs, at least, without borrowing. That is indeed what I shall do, unless I receive some money soon; for you are very anxious to get that uniform, and I too am anxious to send it to you. Reply at once, and enclose in your letter a piece of thread giving me the size of your head, that I may also buy the shako. Tell your papa to take your exact measure, so that your tunic and trousers may not be too big. Your grandmamma Dupin, who is at Charleville, wrote to M. Pierret to buy you a toy as a New Year's gift. I shall put it in the box with a doll for Léontine, and one for Solange.

I am very glad that you are well, my love; but I do not

want you to have any trouble. That would greatly increase my own. Last night I dreamed that you were very ill, and I woke up crying. Fortunately an hour afterwards I received your papa's letter and your own. Enjoy yourself, and only think of me to remember that I love you dearly and shall soon return to you.

Boucoiran must now be at Nohant. You are going to be busy. He will play with you when you have learned your lessons. You must write and say whether your tutor is satisfied with you; if so, your little mamma will be very happy, and will love you still more. You will be good, for my sake; will you not, dear child?

Kiss your papa, and take care to please him. Kiss your uncle and aunt also, your sister and Léontine. As for yourself, my dear love, I send you a thousand kisses. You know that you are what I prize most in this world. Love me too, and always keep in good health.

Does Solange ever speak of her mamma? See that she does not forget me.

YOUR MOTHER.

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN, Nohant.*

PARIS, 12th February, 1831.

MY DEAR BOY,

Thanks for your kind letter; pray write to me often. It is only from you that I get any reliable information as to the exact state of my children. Tell Maurice to write to me, and, as regards his letters to me, do not interfere with his writing, his orthography, or his style. I like his *naïvetés* and his little scribblings. I do not wish that he should consider

the hour devoted to writing to me a time of labour. One page twice a week, that will not interfere with his progress. I am very pleased that he realises the necessity of learning without shedding too many tears. Once accustomed to it, he will not find himself more miserable after than before.

My husband informs me that you are getting thin and are under treatment. Are you really cured, my dear boy? Take care of yourself, do not sleep without a fire, as you used to do last year through sheer neglect, and always keep some refreshing beverage in your room. I, the great Nohant physician, would treat you *ex professo*. What has become of all the patients in the village, since I am no longer there to kill or cure them?

I must tell you in confidence that I have had here the opportunity of bringing my talents into practice; with whom? you could never guess! With Madame P——, my implacable enemy. The unfortunate woman has just made a very mournful journey to Paris, where she came to bury a son who was twenty years old. She was broken down and almost dying with grief when I chanced to hear of her position. I at once hastened to call on her and found her surrounded by several young persons, who wept over their dead friend and deplored the poor disconsolate mother's being left without a woman to soothe her affliction. I sat up all night with her. A sad night it was! But, when she recognised me and, forgetting her enmity towards me, thanked me with effusion, I felt what a pure sweet feeling is a noble revenge, that is, the revenge which consists in returning good for evil. We left each other quite reconciled. I should wager that at La Châtre, and above all at Nohant, my conduct would be looked upon as a mark of insanity. Do not say anything about it; and

should people mention it and bring imputations against me, let them go on talking.

I do not believe, my dear boy, in all the disappointments which people predict to me as regards the literary career upon which I endeavour to enter. People should know what are the motives which urge me to do so, and what aim I have in view. My husband has set down my private expenses at 3,000 francs. You know that that is little for me, who like to give and cannot bear to receive. I therefore only purpose increasing my income from some other source. I have no ambition to be known, and shall not be. I shall not attract either the envy or the hatred of any one. Most writers, I know, lead lives of anguish and struggle; but those whose sole ambition is to earn a livelihood live in peaceable obscurity. Béranger, the great Béranger himself, despite his glory and fame, lives quietly apart from all coteries. It would therefore be very odd if a paltry talent like mine could not withhold itself from the public gaze. The time is gone when publishers used to wait at the doors of authors. It is the reverse now. Of all callings, that of an author is, perhaps, the most independent and the most obscure, so long as one is free from pride and *fanfaronnade*. When people tell me that *glory* is a fresh trouble which I lay in store for myself at some future date, I cannot help laughing at the word *glory* (not a very happy one indeed), as also at all those commonplaces which only apply to genius or to vanity. As I lack both, I hope that I never shall become acquainted with any of those vexations which are supposed to be inevitable. I was invited to go to Kératry's and Madame Récamier's soirées. I have had the good sense to decline the invitations. I go to Kératry's in the morning and we converse by the fireside. I told him

how we cried when reading *le dernier des Beaumanoir*. He replied that he feels more that kind of success than the approbation of a drawing-room. He is a most worthy man. I depend much upon his protection to sell my novelette, which is about to be published in the *Revue de Paris*. I, at last, know it for a certainty; it will be a very important thing for me.

That is what I have done so far. Good-bye, my dear boy; I embrace you cordially. I am obliged to run about a great deal, make numerous calls, and work very hard; that is the only unpleasant side of the profession which I have taken up. When I have overcome the first obstacles I shall rest.

*To M. DUTEIL, Barrister, La Châtre.*

PARIS, 15th February, 1831.

DEAR FRIEND,

The country was imperilled, and I was busy defending it, that is why I did not answer you before. Now that, thanks to my exertions, France is saved, I revert to my friends, I resume my private life and rest on my glory.

You are possibly aware that we have just had a diminutive revolution; very small indeed, a storm in a tea-cup, a tiny revolution, yet as such very acceptable. I say *possibly*, because while people were hurling missals\* at each other's heads in the streets of Paris, it is just possible that, being busy singing, drinking, laughing, or sleeping, you did not read a single column of a newspaper, and are scarcely aware that

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\* Missals as *missiles*—the Archbishop's palace having been pillaged during a riot.

France was again about to perish, an event which would infallibly have occurred but for the impartial conduct and the firm attitude which I displayed in those difficult circumstances !

I have done wonders with M. Duris-Dufresne ; I did all I could to deserve being ejected by him, were he not kindness and meekness itself. He did all in his power in favour of M. M—— and another person whom I recommended to him, and in whom I felt as greatly interested. All he could obtain was promises, what are called *hopes*, a word which appears to me to be made for dupes. I need not tell you that I seized every opportunity of reviving his zeal. Still it would be a mistake, and a very great injustice, to believe that M. Duris-Dufresne displayed any bad grace in his endeavours to serve me !

You must consider how he is placed to-day. By examining the progress of events, you will easily explain the facility with which he at first secured good appointments for his friends, and the difficulty which he meets with to-day when merely soliciting ordinary situations. At the outset of the new Government, the Lafayette party (that is to say, Messrs. de Tracy, Eusèbe Salverte, De Podenas, Duris-Dufresne, etc.) was on the best of terms with the Executive. Those gentlemen had just made a King, and that King could not refuse anything to them. That was only natural. But, as they were not blackguards, having been the dupes of the Hôtel de Ville *promises*, they did not cringe before the *Sire*. Unlike Guizot, Royer-Collard, Dupin, and others of the same stamp, they did not say to him :

“ Majesty, you may do as you please ; we are your very humble servants, and will enforce your dictates, just or unjust,

absurd or reasonable, because you have given us high positions and honours."

The Lafayette party—that is, the Extreme Left—seeing deceit and diplomatic turpitudes creeping into the spirit of the Government, and thwarting the progress of popular institutions by which they had been secured, took offence, and very resolutely went over to the Opposition.

We cannot doubt their being in earnest. In serving the Government they could have preserved the favours and good graces of the Court. They prefer the right of speaking according to their consciences, a right which only produces acrimony in others and sore throats for ourselves.

I am not of their way of thinking! I like laughing, and am selfish enough to feel amused at everything, even at other people's fears. But I esteem and admire the conduct of those old veterans, who, as regards liberty, want everything or nothing, and who are denounced as being mad because incapable of selling themselves.

I, therefore, believe that Duris-Dufresne's influence is terribly low. He has lost with the Government what he has gained in popularity. It is no fault of his if he cannot obtain anything, for the poor old soul wears out many pairs of boots in order to oblige his fellow-creatures. Do you not know M. de Bondy? He is in high favour now, and in a very fine position. If the M—— family has any intercourse with him (which I think it has—unless I dreamt it), I shall willingly undertake any measure that may be required. Tell F—— about it, and give her a kiss for me; I shall write to her in a few days.

For the present I am overwhelmed with work; work which, unfortunately, is very barren in its results. I still live

in hope. Besides, see how strange it is: literature becomes a passion. The more obstacles, the more difficulties you perceive, the more ambitious you are of overcoming them. Yet you would be quite mistaken if you thought that I am possessed by the love of glory. That latter expression always provokes my laughter. I desire to earn a little money; and, since in order to do so I must create for myself a name in literature, I try to obtain one (a fancy one). I endeavour to write articles for the newspapers. I succeed only with infinite trouble and dogged perseverance. Had I foreseen half the difficulties which I meet with, I should never have embraced that career. Now, the more obstacles I find, the greater my desire to get on. I shall, however, soon go *home* again, and perhaps before succeeding in launching my boat; but still with the hope of doing better the next time, and with schemes of work more assiduous than ever.

We must have a passion in life. I was growing weary for want of one. The active and often needy life which I lead here banishes the spleen. I feel thoroughly well, and when you see me again you will notice that I am quite cheerful.

With all this, I hope that our good Agasta's\* health will keep good, and that I shall find her again fresh and lively. We shall yet dance the *bourrée*† together.

Good-bye, my dear friend. Should you have any ideas send them to me; for in our days, ideas are rare and precious things. People write because it is a calling; but they do not think because they cannot afford the time. Events pass too quickly and leave us quite dazzled.

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\* Madame Duteil.

† A national dance in certain parts of France, similar to the jig.



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“Writers (says the sublime De Latouche) are tools. In our days, they are not men ; they are pens ! ”

And, when uttering their twaddle, other people must go into fits of admiration and pretend to be quite taken aback for fear of being looked upon as asses.

Good evening. With cordial love to Agasta and yourself.

*To MAURICE DUDEVANT, Nohant.*

PARIS, *Wednesday Evening, 16th February, 1831.*

MY DEAR BOY,

I had no time to put a word for you in your uncle's letter. I received your note this morning. I am very glad to know that you are well and enjoying yourself. I should be most happy to see you, dear child, but very sorry that you should be here now. There is no pleasure here. People are all quarrelling, murdering one another in the streets, pulling down the churches, and beating drums all night. You are much better off at Nohant, where everybody loves you, and you may run about and enjoy yourself without seeing wicked people fighting one another.

Good-bye, my dear boy ; be always diligent, write to me often, and kiss your papa, your little sister, and Boucoiran for me. Your little sister and yourself I love more than anything else in this world, and send you a thousand kisses.

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN, Nohant.*

PARIS, 4th March, 1831.

MY DEAR BOY,

Thanks for having written. I only live by what relates to Maurice, and the information respecting him which reaches me through you is the sweetest and dearest. Love him well, the poor little dear! do not spoil him, and yet do your best to make him happy. You possess what is necessary to educate him without making him miserable: firmness and kindness. Tell me whether he learns his lessons cheerfully. When with him, I can display severity; but at a distance, all my weakness as a mother is roused and the mere thought of his tears causes me to weep. Yes, indeed, I suffer much, separated from my children. That suffering is cruel. But it is not a time to give way to lamentations; another month here, and I shall clasp them to my bosom. Until then, I must attend to my undertaking.

✓ I am more than ever intent upon following a literary career. In spite of the repugnance which I sometimes experience, despite the days of idleness and fatigue which cause me to break off my work, in spite of the life, more than quiet, which I lead here, I feel that henceforth my existence has an aim. I have a purpose in view, a task before me, and, if I may use the word, a *passion*. For the profession of writing is nothing else but a violent, indestructible passion. When it has once entered people's heads it never leaves them.

I met with no success. My work was looked upon as unlikely by the people whose opinion I courted. Their

conviction is that there is too much morality and virtue in it to make it appear probable in the eyes of the public. That is quite correct. The poor public must be served according to their tastes, and I am going to follow the fashion. It will not be good. I wash my hands of it. They agree to receive my production in the *Revue de Paris*, but they keep me waiting. Known authors are to pass before me. Nothing could be more proper. I therefore exercise patience. I am endeavouring to get contributions into the *Mode* and the *Artiste*, two periodicals similar to the *Revue*. It would be odd if I did not succeed with any.

In the meantime, I must live. For that purpose I am doing the meanest of work. I write articles for the *Figaro*. If you only knew what it is! But they pay seven francs for a column; besides which it enables me to eat and drink and even go to the play, by putting into practice certain advice which you gave me. It affords me the opportunity of making most useful and amusing observations. When intending to write, people must see and know everything and laugh at everything. Ah, upon my word, there is nothing like an artist's life. Our motto is *liberty*.

That is, however, a rather exaggerated boast. We do not precisely enjoy *liberty* at the *Figaro*. M. de Latouche, our *worthy* director (ah! you ought to know the fellow), is always hanging over us, cutting, pruning, right or wrong, imposing upon us his whims, his aberrations, his fancies, and we have to write as he bids; for, after all, that is his affair. We are but his working tools. At present I am nothing but a *working journalist* (*ouvrier journaliste*), an *assistant editor* (*garçon rédacteur*). When seeing the platitudes which I have scribbled being eagerly snatched by twenty pairs of hands,

which fight over them; when considering that those same platitudes are passing under the eyes of benevolent readers, whose lot it is to be mystified, I cannot help laughing at them and at myself! I sometimes see them trying to guess enigmas without word or meaning, and I help them to get muddled. I yesterday wrote an article for *Madame Duvernet*. People say it is for M. de Quélen,\* so you may judge.

Good-bye, my dear boy; please to kiss for me my brother, and my sister, *if she will allow you*. Tell 'Polyte† to write more frequently. Shut up as I am in my *worthy* director's office of witticisms from nine o'clock in the morning to five in the evening, I scarcely have any time to devote to my own correspondence, but I like to receive letters from Nohant. It soothes both my head and my heart.

I kiss you and love you well. Tell me what you are now teaching Maurice.

I have again seen Kératry, and have had quite enough of him. Alas! celebrities should not be scanned too closely.

*De loin c'est quelque chose,‡* etc. (It looks important at a distance.)

I am still quite in love with M. Duris-Dufresne. I saw Madame Bertrand at the Chamber of Deputies. She was behind me in the ladies' gallery; I offered her my seat. I was polite, she gracious, and that ends the story.

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\* Archbishop of Paris at the time.

† Abbreviation of Hippolyte.

‡ Allusion to Lafontaine's fable, "The Camels and the Floating Sticks."

*To M. CHARLES DUVERNET, La Châtre.*

PARIS, 6th March, 1831.

You are hopelessly lazy, my dear comrade. Were we not old friends, I should get cross with you; but I must forgive you, for I suppose old friends cannot mend their ways in a day. Are you aware that you are doing fine things here? It is really very funny. The revolution is permanent, like the sittings of the Chamber. Yet we live as gaily in the midst of bayonets, riots, and ruin, as though we were fully in peace. It amuses me. It is a pity for those who dislike it, but in this world we must laugh or weep over what passes before us. Although I sometimes cry like anybody else, in most cases I laugh.

Tell me, my dear comrade; it seems that you are at times subject to fits of spleen? How can you avoid them? With me trouble does not leave a very deep impression; with you care seems to stick, at least I am so inclined to believe from some sentences in your letter. I am not in the least surprised to hear it; the air of your part of the country is rather heavy to breathe, society there is not over-refined, the gossip one hears is not witty, neither are the pleasures one enjoys very lively. Life is worth living anywhere, I know, but one must have interests, a home, some private occupation, a purpose and advantages. At your age there is nothing of the sort, and at mine . . . what should I say? They are not sufficient. A little patience! at forty we shall be the best *erichons* in the world.

In the meantime, we must vary our life. Instead of *cturing* to you I would advise you to come to Paris

as often as possible. I am aware that parents do not easily part with their children, but being tenderly loved and rather spoiled, if you were to express a strong desire to come it is ten to one that you would not meet with much resistance. If they would listen to me I should certainly speak for you, impressed as I am with the impossibility of being happy at La Châtre, when one is neither advanced in years, nor the head of a family, nor perforce reasonable.

I am not of those who say : *To live is to enjoy oneself*, or rather I do not understand it as they do. We do not at all times want the opera in order to spend pleasant evenings. The opera is no doubt a delightful place, but we can laugh elsewhere, and to our hearts' content. Odry himself, the sublime Odry, is not indispensable to my felicity, though contributing powerfully towards it. I enjoy myself anywhere—anywhere, that is, wherever hatred, suspicion, injustice and sourness of heart do not infest the air. If people were not wicked I should not mind their being stupid ; but, to our misfortune, they are both. That is why life in the provinces is hateful. Everywhere there is some hidden venom, and we may apply to the country parts what Victor Hugo said of a prison : *Vous y cueillez une fleur, et elle pique ou elle pue.* (Pluck a flower there, and it will sting or stink.) It seems odd, but it is true.

I nevertheless long to go back to Berry ; for I have children whom I love more than anything else. But for the hope of being some day more useful to them with the scribe's pen than with the housewife's needle, I should not part from them so long. In spite of the innumerable difficulties I meet with, I intend taking my first steps in that thorny career. ) .

I have at last decided to write in the *Figaro*, and am delighted to know that you are one of its subscribers; it will be a way of chatting with you, particularly if M. de Latouche should often have the happy thought of commissioning me to write such articles as that of *Molinara*, an article which was more indebted to the heart than to the head. It was in his study, at his table, and in collaboration with him that I wrote that idyll, whose enigma the good Parisian public (an excellent people whose fate is to be duped) was trying to solve the next day with incredible efforts.

You would have laughed had you seen the good *bourgeois* of the Conti café. . . . (You surely know the Conti café, opposite the Pont-Neuf? You several times had your mid-day meal there, and I too.) You would have laughed, I say, had you seen them closely perusing the *Figaro*, and giving themselves to the devil in order to ascertain what political enigma might be concealed under that *Molinara* and that deuce of a mill.

Some said, "It is an emblem;" others replied, "It is an anagram;" and others again retorted, "It is a logogriph." "Who then is that female miller?" "It is Delphine Gay!" "Oh! no, it is the Duchess of Berry." "Nonsense! it is the wife of the Dey of Algiers." "At any rate, it is extremely clever; there is no seeing through it."

As for me, I was laughing, not in my beard,\* but in my snuff-box, and said to them in a mysterious way: "Gentlemen, I know on good authority that it is the Pope's wife." To which they retorted: "Impossible! Upon my word!"

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\* *Rire dans sa barbe*—To laugh in one's sleeve.

Since then, you have seen a lengthy article headed *Vision*. M. de Latouche thought it remarkable, and *requested me* to give it to him. It emanates from the pen of J. S—,\* who had entrusted it to me, and was not very pleased to see it mutilated and curtailed. He intended it for the *Voleur*,† and I *purloined* it on behalf of the *Figaro*. In the same number, a motley piece (the first) is causing quite a scandal. It has no other merit than that of holding up to ridicule the circumstance to which it related, and that is precisely the reason why the laughing public eagerly seized it; the Citizen-King felt offended by it; and M. Nestor Roqueplan, whose signature appears in the paper, being on the point of receiving the cross ‡ (of which His Majesty is rather lavish), saw himself deprived of it because of the aforesaid article, for which he is responsible. *Yet it was I who did it all!* I can scarcely recover from my surprise, and laugh so much that my jaws will nearly go out of joint. O august proprieties of La Châtre, what will you say of my imprudence?

M. de Latouche himself went even so far as to advertise *windows to let, in order to see the first riot caused by M. Vivien*.§ All these amenities incensed the Citizen-King and Father Persil,|| who said to His Majesty:

“By Jove, Sire, that is rather too strong!”

\* Jules Sandeau.

† A Parisian periodical.

‡ The Cross of the Knight of the Legion of Honour.

§ Prefect of Police.

|| Jean Charles Persil, French judge and statesman. In 1834 he was appointed by Louis Philippe to succeed Barthe as Minister of Justice, a position which he held until 1837.



"Do you think so?" replied the Citizen-King. "Ought I to be angry?"

"Yes, Sire, you certainly should."

Then the Citizen-King got angry, the result being that they seized the *Figaro*, and brought an action against it for seditious tendency (*procès de tendance*). If the articles are respectively incriminated, mine surely will be. If so, I intend to disclose my authorship, and so to go to prison. By Jove! what a scandal that would cause at La Châtre! What horror and what despair for my family! But my reputation would be made, and I should get a publisher to buy my platitudes and simpletons to read them. I would gladly give nine francs fifty centimes to secure the luck of a conviction.

I do not dwell upon the *Nouvelle Atala*. I swallowed it, and shall long remember it! It gave me an attack of cholera-morbus, which lasted three days. You will some day see a review of it in your paper.

Good night, my dear comrade; I give you a hearty embrace. Write oftener, even when in a bad humour; have I not also my *nebulous* days? When I am home again, that will be next month, if you feel low-spirited, come and see me. We shall put our troubles together and try to drown them, provided there be any water.

I do not mention here your *affair of honour*. What a stupid you are! I intend admonishing you severely; but do not indulge such nonsense any more.

Good-bye; good night. My love to your mother, and do not forget me.

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN, Nohant.*

PARIS, 9th March, 1831.

MY DEAR BOY,

I am downhearted. At a distance, they still endeavour to do me harm. A letter from my brother—a bitterly sour letter—contains the following: "*Your son is the best thing you ever produced; he loves you more than anybody in the world. Take care not to impair that feeling.*"

There is much cruelty in that phrase. It is equivalent to saying that some day I shall not even be able to rely upon my child's affection. If his heart is selfish and cold, I must doubtless expect that. But it will not be so, will it?

You are with him, you speak of me and preserve intact my most precious treasure—my son's love? Bah! I am wrong to give way to melancholy. It is doing *you* injury. I feel quite safe in that respect.

They blame me, it seems, for writing in the *Figaro*. I do not care a jot. People must live, and I am proud enough to earn my bread myself. The *Figaro*, like any other paper, may lead to success. *Journalism* is an apprenticeship which I must serve. I am aware that it is something loathsome; but one is not obliged to soil one's hands in order to write, and I shall, I hope, succeed without soiling mine. That small sheet goes in both for *opposition* and *defamation*. The great point is not to take the one for the other. It is not much to earn seven francs per column; but it is much to become indispensable to a literary office. That may lead you anywhere, even without *camaraderie*, and without its being necessary for the *individual* to appear. I only have to deal

with M. de Latouche. I always live a quiet and retired life. I go to the theatre nearly every night with the orders which he gives me. It is very pleasant. /

You must learn that I started with a *scandal*, a skit on the National Guards. The police caused the *Figaro* of the day before yesterday to be seized. I was already preparing myself to go and spend six months at La Force,\* for I certainly meant to assume the responsibility of my article. M. Vivien, realising the absurdity of a prosecution of that kind, sent word to the tribunals this morning that proceedings must be stopped. So much the worse for me! A political conviction might have made my reputation and my fortune.

Literature is plunged in the same chaos as politics. There is a preoccupation, an uncertainty pervading everything. People want something new, and, to meet their wishes, authors bring forth hideous productions. Balzac is foremost among writers, having depicted the love of a soldier for a *tigress*, and that of an artist for a *castrato*. Good gracious, what are we coming to!

Since monsters are the fashion, let us make monsters! I am just now engaged in *creating* a very pleasant one. I shall give you some singular particulars of all I see. Had I the time to note them down they would make a curious diary.

Good-bye, dear boy; give me plenty of information respecting my son, and do not be reticent as regards your health. With cordial love.

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\* A prison for political offenders.

*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN, Paris.*

NOHANT, 14th April, 1831.

MY DEAR MAMMA,

Excuse my having delayed so long informing you of my safe arrival ; but I stopped several days at Bourges, where I was taken rather seriously ill. I am quite well again, now that I have once more seen my children. They are two real darlings. Solange has grown as handsome as an angel. No rose could give you an idea of her freshness. Maurice is still very slim ; but his health is good, and it is impossible to meet with a more lovely and affectionate child. I am also quite satisfied with his progress and his quiet attention to his studies. In short I am, up to the present, a happy mother.

I found 'Polyte rather poorly ; his wife always the same, kind and indolent ; my husband, always scolding and a hearty eater ; the tutor with moustaches, which are as becoming to him as lace would be to a hedgehog ; Léontine, having made great progress, and as meek as ever. Now you have all the news !

And you, my dear mamma, what are you doing during this fine weather, which was already imparting a holiday appearance to Paris when I left ? Do you take Caroline out so that she may enjoy herself before going back to her dull Charleville ? Dull, indeed, it is ! though she may not think so herself ; for there she will again meet with her dear Oscar, and, in the company of one's children, the dullest of places seems cheerful.

Is Pierret still in love with his fine rifle, which does duty for a jewel on his mantelpiece, and is he still furious

against Republicans ? Tell him that at the next rising women will repel the National Guards with chamber utensils.

Here people are very quiet in general ; they only quarrel at home. Unable to indulge in riots, they indulge in gossiping. I am so sick of it that I shut myself up in my study, with my two little ones, in order not to hear the conversation of those whose only topics are hatred, elections, intrigues, scheming, vengeance, etc. etc. Fie upon it all !

Gossiping is the plague of little towns. With respect to politics, men indulge in it at least as much as women. In Paris they laugh at everything, here they take it in earnest. It is enough to make life burdensome, for, after all, we are not born to wrangle from the cradle to the grave. As for myself, I prefer to leave men as they are, rather than take the trouble of lecturing them.

Do you not share my disposition, dear mother ? you, whose mind is so young and whose disposition is so cheerful ? I wish Maurice were old enough to go to college ; I should then spend part of my life in Paris, with you and him. I like the freedom which one enjoys there, as also the listlessness which is the chief feature in the character of the inhabitants.

We all here send you a thousand kisses ; when returning the same give me the largest share.

Good evening, my dear little mamma.

*To THE SAME, Paris.*

NOHANT, 31st May, 1831.

MY DEAR LITTLE MAMMA,

You are low-spirited. You are still on the point of being left alone. Company is not consistent with freedom of

action. You like society and yet detest restraint; it is the same with me. Still, how are we to make other people's wishes agree with our own desires? I do not know. Perhaps we ought to overlook a good many little things, tolerate many imperfections inherent in human nature, and resign ourselves to endure certain little vexations unavoidable in any position. Are you not rather too severe in your judgment of transient wrongs? True, you easily forgive, and quickly forget, but do you not sometimes condemn rather hastily?

As for me, my dear mamma, I regard freedom of thought and of action as paramount blessings in this world. If we can add the little cares of a family, life then becomes infinitely sweeter; but where is such a happy combination to be met with? The one always interferes with the other; independence of our surroundings, or *vice versâ*. You alone can best decide which of the two you would prefer to sacrifice. I cannot myself bear even the shadow of coercion, that is my chief defect. All that is imposed upon me as a duty becomes hateful to me; all that I am free to do without interference I do with all my heart. It is often a great misfortune to be thus constituted, and my faults, whatever they may be, all proceed from that cause.

But can we modify our nature? If you had much indulgence for that failing of mine you would find me some day quite free from it, without knowing how the conversion had taken place. Your always reproaching me with it only increases it; and that, I can assure you, is not the result of a spirit of contradiction, but of an involuntary, irresistible inclination. You know me very little, my dear mamma, I venture to say. It is many years since we lived together, and you often forget that I am twenty-seven years old, and that,

since my early youth, my disposition must have greatly altered.

You strongly suspect me of a love of pleasure, of a thirst for amusement and diversion, of which I am far from being possessed. I do not crave for society, the bustling of cities, theatres, dresses, or jewellery; you alone are mistaken respecting me: what I long for is liberty. Being alone in the streets, and saying to myself: "I shall dine at four or at seven, if I please. I shall pass through the Luxembourg Gardens instead of through the Champs Élysées on my way to the Tuileries, if I feel so inclined;" that is what amuses me a great deal more than the insipidity of men or the stiffness of drawing-rooms.

If I meet with those who regard my innocent whims as hypocritical vices, I do not care to take the trouble to correct them. I feel that such people sicken, underrate, and insult me. I do not answer them, but leave their society. Am I very culpable in that? I seek neither for vengeance nor reparation; I am not wicked—I forget. Some say that I am giddy, because I am no hater and not proud enough to justify myself.

Heavens! whatever possesses us, here below, that we mutually torment ourselves, sourly reproach our mutual faults, and mercilessly condemn all that is not cut according to our pattern?

You, my dear mamma, have suffered from intolerance, from false virtue, from *high principled* people. Your beauty, your youth, your independence, your happy and easy disposition have all in turn been decried. With what venom was not your brilliant destiny poisoned! Had an indulgent and affectionate mother clasped you to her bosom with each fresh trouble, and said to you, "Let men condemn you; as for me,

I exonerate you from all guilt : let them curse you ; I, I bless you ! ” what comfort would not that have been to you ! What a consolation for the mortifications and meanness of life !

They have told you that *I wear the breeches* ; what a misstatement ! Were you to spend only twenty-four hours here, you would soon convince yourself that it is not so. But, on the other hand, I object to my husband wearing my petticoat. Every one to his own garment, to every one his own freedom. I have my failings ; my husband his. Were I to tell you that our home is a model of a home, that there has never been a cloud between us, you would not credit my assertion. Like that of everybody else, my position has its advantages and disadvantages. The fact is, that my husband does what he likes ; he keeps mistresses or does not, as he pleases ; he drinks Muscat wine or pure water, if it suits him ; he hoards or spends his money, builds, plants, exchanges, buys, sells, governs his estates and his house as he thinks fit ; I have nothing to do with any of it.

I never find fault with what he does, because I know him to be possessed of order, rather economical than prodigal, loving his children, and always considering their interest in whatever he undertakes. As you see, I entertain towards him nothing but esteem and confidence, and, seeing that I gave up the management of our property entirely to him, I scarcely believe myself still open to the suspicion of intending to rule him.

My wants are limited : the same allowance, the same comforts as your own. With a thousand *écus* \* a year I think myself rich enough, seeing that my pen already brings me a

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\* An *écu* is worth about three francs.



small income. Besides, it is only right that the great freedom enjoyed by my husband should be reciprocal; were it not so, he would become odious and contemptible in my eyes; and that he does not wish to be. I am, therefore, quite independent; I go to bed when he gets up. I go to La Châtre or to Rome; I return home at midnight or at six in the evening; all that is my own business. Those who find fault with me will, no doubt, descant about it; judge their words with your reason and your mother's heart, both of which ought to be in my favour.

I shall go to Paris this summer. So long as you say that I am agreeable and dear to you, you will find me happy and grateful. Should I see around you bitter criticisms, offensive suspicions (you understand that I should not mind such from you), I shall give up the place to the most powerful, and, without vindictiveness, without passion, I shall enjoy my freedom and a clear conscience. You are too intelligent not to quickly recognise that I do not deserve such harsh treatment.

Good-bye, dear little mamma; my children's health is quite good; my daughter is a fine, though rather ill-tempered girl; Maurice is very slim, but such a nice boy. I am quite satisfied with his disposition and the progress he makes with his studies. I spoil my big daughter a little: the example of Maurice, who has grown to be so quiet and meek, calms my apprehensions as to the future.

Write to me, dear mamma; I kiss you with all my might.

*To M. CHARLES DUVERNET, La Châtre.*

NOHANT, *Monday Evening, 25th June, 1831.*

As when we see each other on Friday it will be between the kindly and paternal air of the *lord of the manor* and the *decaudinadian*\* *facetiae*, we shall probably be unable to have an uninterrupted conversation. Yet I will not leave here without telling you, my kind Charlie, how sweet to me your friendship has been during the last three months. We did not know one another, and the intercourse of our youth could not have taught us anything new, had not a mutual affection drawn those ties closer, and bound together hearts whose respective peculiarities required to be understood.

But for you, I should have felt more deeply the bitterness of my home. The interest which you displayed towards me, the confidence with which I disclosed my troubles to you, soothed down that time of trial. By sharing each other's troubles, we the better succeeded in supporting them. At least, I may say so on my own account, and only wish that the benefit of that friendship may have been reciprocal.

Fools like myself have this good point: they are not sparing of their hearts when they have once given them. Disabused regarding all the rest, I only believe in those who remained faithful to me or understood me, with my faults, my *anti-social* spirit, and my scorn of all that which most men respect. I feel I have enough generosity to begin with such people a fresh existence, a life of affection, hope, and confidence, which the recollection of so many former deceptions will not cool down. Oh! in the midst of you all I shall readily

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\* Applying to Decaudin, one of Duvernet's friends.

forget everything; friends who betray us, and friends who feel annoyed by the troubles entrusted to them, and those who fear to commit themselves by seeking to remedy such troubles, and the lukewarm, the perfidious, and the awkward friends who bespatter us when trying to wipe us. I will put my faith in you, as I formerly put it in them, and I will not hold you responsible for their wrongs, by reservedly trusting to your promises, in which I believe and upon which I rely.

It was on the ruins of the past, of prejudice and prepossessions, that we saw each other such as we are, and, I believe, such as Nature made us.

It was by entrusting each other with our mutual infirmities that we felt an interest in one another. But for desiring to receive or to give consolation, we very likely should have all remained isolated in the midst of that vain and silly society which never will forgive our having shaken off the thralldom of its narrow-minded laws. Let it talk! It would look upon our small community in the light of a lunatic asylum. Let us live aside, and frequent it only to laugh at or forgive, in its midst, our little enmities. Would you were, like myself, insensible to its attacks, and placing your real life, your whole happiness, in the heart of the small numbers who appreciate you and tolerate me, who am so grateful whenever I secure even indulgence. Do not all home troubles become bearable with the idea that there are beings quite ready to make up for the injustice or ingratitude of our hearths?

Oh! my kind Charlie, may that thought be soothing to you, as it is to me! Let it heal up all wounds, annihilate all sickening recollections, build afresh your future, and make your heart younger still, as it did mine, though much older,

alas! much more deadly wounded than your own! Believe in us, and you will be happy anywhere, even at La Châtre.

Come to us, to our beloved Paris, where there reigns, if not public, at least individual liberty. We will, from time to time, obtain an order for the pit at the "Italiens" or the "Opera." When penniless, we will visit the cathedrals; it does not cost anything, and always affords interesting study. Or else we will take the fresh air on my balcony; we will witness the progress of fresh riots, and spit on all rioters: vanquished and victors, all mad enough to excite pity. We will garotte the "Gaul," to prevent his joining the mob; we will make Planet bawl out, and amuse ourselves with each other's manias, without ridiculing them or suffering by them. In the daytime we will work, for work is wholesome. When one has not been shut up in the morning, as we remarked the other day at the Coudray, one does not enjoy the pleasure of being free in the evening. We must live under restraint one half of our life in order to enjoy the other half. You will take up some sort of occupation, were it only to connect *Claire and Philippe, Jehan Cauvin and the Cathedral, Berido and the Prima Donna*.<sup>\*</sup> We will hire a piano and resume our musical studies. Should you grow tired of a bachelor's life, you have plenty of time to get married; for, with us, you will be free to break off whenever you please; but try it first, you will make up your mind afterwards. There will always be marriageable girls; they are a species which grows and multiplies by the grace of Providence.

At any rate, my kind Charlie, whether married or single or a widower, whether you be Charlie pondering in your chamber

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<sup>\*</sup> Heroines of various unpublished literary fragments written by George Sand.





GEORGE SAND at the age of 27.

From a portrait by herself.

over the miseries of a student's, an artist's, or a bachelor's life, or else M. Receveur\* in the bosom of your *interesting* family; whether free to visit us, or forbidden to do so by your future bride, you must always love us; and rest assured whenever you can steal away from home and take a run down here, you will always find us delighted to see you and ready to afford you some cheerful distraction. In the meantime we are going to talk about you.

Good-bye then; I kiss you. Come as soon as you can.

*To MAURICE DUDEVANT, La Châtre.*

ORLEANS, *Saturday, 3rd July, 1831.*

MY DARLING LOVE,

I have reached Orleans rather tired. I have had a nasty headache all through the journey. I am going to rest here for a day or two, in order to thoroughly visit the cathedral; for you know that I am very fond of cathedrals. A year ago you were here with me, and we went to see it together. Do you recollect it? You thought it very large, and that it would require many little Maurices, one on the top of the other, in order to reach so high.

I am very satisfied with you, my dear child; you did not cry much while I was there. Tell me what you did after I was gone. Did you like your little *dinner service*? Do you think it pretty? Did you show it to your sister? She cried too, the poor dear. Did you cheer her up? You must play with her, romp about on your bed at night, and go to sleep laughing and singing. Do not have naughty, sad dreams;

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\* Collector of Inland Revenue.

think of me without sorrow, and always study well, in order to show me that you love me.

You saw how happy I was to find that you had given up being lazy. You must go on improving ; I shall reward your efforts by loving you more every day. I hardly know whether you will be able to read my scribbling ; I write with a kind of stick which goes all awry. I kiss you with all my heart, first of all for yourself, then for your sister, your papa, Boucoiran, and again for yourself a million times. Good-bye, my sweet angel. Write to me often, very often.

*TO THE SAME.*

PARIS, 16th July, 1831.

I am at last quite settled at home, my little love. I have three nice little rooms, with a balcony overlooking the river and commanding a magnificent view. When you come to see me you will amuse yourself by looking at the troops marching through the streets, and watching the firemen on duty.\* There is a guardhouse opposite. Every time a *gendarme* comes up those poor firemen are obliged to stand to their rifles and shoulder arms. As that is of frequent occurrence they have not a minute's rest in the course of the day, and people who pass by make fun of them. You will also see the tower of Notre Dame ; they are swarmed with swallows. All over the walls there are stone figures of devils, in all sorts of attitudes, and birds hide themselves in their jaws and build their nests in them.

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\* The Paris fire brigade forms part of the army, but those who compose it are not liable to foreign service.



I saw your cousin Oscar again last evening. He is very nice, and will not leave me. He is about to enter a boarding-school; were he not, I should have brought him with me, and you would have played together, but it is high time that he should learn what you yourself already know. You will be very thankful, when you go to college, to have taken good lessons in advance. You will have less trouble than other boys of your age, and see what a great blessing it is to have been compelled to learn.

Write to me, my dear child; your last letter is very good. It gave me great pleasure, and I kissed it many times. If you were here, poor little dear, I should eat you up. In the meantime, kiss your sister and keep in good health. Think often of your mother, who loves you more than anything else in this world.

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN, Nohant.*

PARIS, 17th July, 1831.

MY DEAR BOY,

I am sorry for your political optimism, but your infamous Government is cruelly provoking respectable people. Were I a man, it is hard to tell what excesses I might resort to, in certain fits of indignation, which every well-thinking person must feel at the atrocities which are daily perpetrated here.

It is really a civil war which Ministers kindle and keep up for their own advantage. Infamous! The national colours are proscribed. It is sufficient to wear them to be cut down, in odious cold blood, by cowardly armed men,

who are not ashamed to kill small groups of defenceless children.

The fine institution of National Guards has become a haven of blood and discord. The police resort to means worthy of the worst times of Carrier (of Nantes). It seems as if Philippe wanted to ape Napoleon. But that is a part which a Bourbon can never play. His efforts will delay his fall, but it will be all the more tragical, and then the people will surely not be culpable, even though they should commit all sorts of excesses.

As for myself, I hate all men, kings and nations alike. At times I feel as though I could enjoy doing them some harm. My only rest is when forgetting all about them!

You are kind yourself! That is different. Friends, oh, true friends! What a scarce treasure they are, and how difficult to keep! If they are not always firmly held, they escape like water through the fingers.

My heart is cruelly wounded; yet I know that it would be ungrateful of me to weep long over those who forsake me. The smaller the number of my friends, the stronger my affection for them. They get the share which belonged to those who are no longer worthy of it.

I thank you for having given me some particulars about Maurice. Take care that he writes to me often, that he is not quite left to himself when not taking his lessons, and that he learns with pleasure. His last letter is charming.

Good-bye, my dear boy. I kiss you as I love you. That is, from my innermost soul.

To M. CHARLES DUVERNET, *La Châtre*.

PARIS, 19th July, 1831.

MY DEAR CHARLES,

Be indulgent and forgive my being so slow in answering. I am at last settled, *Quai Saint Michel*, 25, and hope that, for the future, I shall not expose myself to the remorse of not giving a prompt answer to your kind and amiable letters. I leave you to imagine the amount of memory, of legs, patience, and time I must have displayed to purchase my small household furniture, from the dust-pan to the snuffers: it is never-ending. The worst of it is the money it costs. I should, nevertheless, be very wrong to complain, for I have not paid anything yet, but intend doing so if it please God.

The "Gaul" and myself are relying upon a regular patriotic *slaughter*, or upon a proper epidemic of cholera-morbus, to free us from the infamous *clique* of creditors. Besides, are we not going to have a Republic? and the first article of the new charter will, I hope, provide for the suppression of all debts and the transportation of all creditors. We let them off with their lives because we are grand and generous, but they must never be so ill-advised as to remind us of the past! (only Carlists or Jesuits could be capable of so much resentment). If desirous to avoid the *guillotine*, which, as everybody knows, is *sister to Liberty*, our creditors must rid us for ever of their hateful presence, and purge the soil of the regenerated country of their impure and stupid transactions. Such is going to be the text of the first speech which the "Gaul" contemplates delivering in the next Parliament.

Why do you continue without some occupation, my dear friend? At least you should avoid weariness, were it only by employing your time in cutting toothpicks. Planet uses as many as will occupy all your leisure. If you dislike figures and do not contemplate succeeding to your father, do something else; read, learn—life is too short for acquiring all that is to be learned. Write novels, comedies, proverbs, dramas—all that will procure you an agreeable occupation, and compel you to undertake historical researches which will be full of life and interest to you.

Growing weary! I cannot conceive that of you. As for being low-spirited! that is a different thing. The seclusion, the antipathy of a monotonous provincial life, are well calculated to depress the heart. I know something of it. *Something* only, for I have an immense resource to fall back upon—my children's society. But you, you are alone, dreaming, without a friend capable of thoroughly understanding you, suffering from that nameless disease which the community regards as a mania and an affectation, trying to empty your heart into a heart of the same stamp, and only meeting with good and simple souls who say to you with an air of surprise: "What! you complain? are you not rich? In your place I should feel happy!" etc.

As for myself, I can fully realise your sufferings. Isolation kills active minds. It enervates one's disposition; but it gives fresh impulse to the inward fire which devours us, and to the torment of desiring adds that of being incapable of *willing*.

Is not that often the state of your mind? I could scarcely dare to say to you: "Put an end to it, by coming to us!" Yet I earnestly desire it! we love you as you deserve to be

loved. I think that in our midst you would soon take to life again. Write to us often and at length ; you have plenty of leisure, whereas I have not.

If you go to Nohant, will you pray tell Boucoiran that my son writes very seldom to me, and that it pains me very much.

Good-bye, friend. Write, or do better, come yourself.

I have not bought the plait of hair for your mother, nor the spectacles for Decaudin. I have a shameful, secret but *unimpeachable* reason for abstaining. I am penniless. I pay my accursed dealers by instalments. 'O Poverty ! if ever thou shouldst leave me, I will build thee a temple ; for those whom thou dost harass are happier than men think !

The "Gaul" requested me not to close my letter, as he means to write to you. That is a good reason for not depending upon his doing so. . . .

Here he is ! He says that he will write *to-morrow* : you know what the "Gaul's" *morrow* means.

*To MAURICE DUDEVANT, Nohant.*

PARIS, July, 1831.

I am very grieved, my little child, whenever you do not write. I received your three letters, but that is not much. It only amounts to one a week. Previously, you used to write two and often three. Do you no longer enjoy writing to your mother ? You need not show your letters to any one, or write them so carefully as to cause writing to be a labour to you. When you used to send scrawls and bedaub your letters with little figures, I liked them quite as well. Never mind

how badly you write to me, so long as you write, if only a few lines. To spend a whole week without news from your sister and yourself is too long, and grieves me much. I want to know that you are happy and cheerful; then only can I feel happy myself.

There are many fine pictures at the Musée; \* the Musée is a large gallery where, every year, all artists exhibit their pictures for a few months in order to show them to the public. The prettiest picture shown this year represents two boys seven or eight years old, sitting on a bed. The one is ill, and leans his head upon his brother's shoulder. The other is in good health; he is holding a picture-book to amuse his brother. It is the portrait of two young English princes who were strangled by wicked men.†

There is also a quantity of fine statues which you would recognise, since you now understand something of mythology. The finest is the group of the *Three Graces*, in white marble. There is a nice little allegorical deity about which we did not talk together; it is *Candour* or *Innocence*, represented by a child holding a shell, out of which a snake is drinking. It means that, as children do not suspect danger, persons possessed of *candour* do not suspect wicked people who may do them harm.

If you should not fully understand my explanation, Boucoiran will explain it better to you. There is also a big child, just like Solange, who plays with a little goat; the latter is eating a wreath of foliage which the child wears on its head. All are in fine white marble. Besides these, *Mercury*, *Diana*, and many more *ladies* and *gentlemen* of your acquaint-

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\* Now called the Salon.

† Paul Delaroche's celebrated production, "Les Enfants d'Edouard."

ance are there. The fêtes lasted three days. From my window I witnessed the King defiling with all his troops. The day before yesterday we had jousting on the water : sailors dressed in white, with gay ribbons round their hats and waists, and in pretty boats which were dashed one against another in mimic battle. The sailors fought, or at least pretended to fight, as actors sometimes do at the play. Many fell into the Seine ; but as they were all capital swimmers, they did not mind the ducking and were soon again in their boats. On the bank of the river there was a fine marquee, for the judges who awarded the prizes to the victors.

I took Léontine with me and she saw it all ; the tall Fleury carried her on his head, and they came back home one on the top of the other ; as for me, I came back with a nasty headache. At night, I saw the illuminations without leaving my room. There were four columns of lanterns round Henri IV.'s statue, and the towers of Notre Dame were also lighted up ; the effect was very fine. From my balcony I saw the fireworks which were discharged on the Place de la Révolution.\* It is very far from where I live ; but the fusees went so high in the air, that they were quite visible ; some gave out tricolour flames ; it was superb.

There was camel-racing in the Champ de Mars. Men dressed up as Bedouins were riding on horses and dromedaries. One of them fell and was killed. There was also a review on the boulevards of all the troops in Paris ; a hundred and fifty thousand men it is computed. All that would have been very amusing if there had been fewer people looking on. You ran the risk of being trampled on by the crowd, and three-fourths of the spectators could

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\* Now the Place de la Concorde.

not see anything, because there were too many people in front and around them. All the theatres gave free performances. Besides, everywhere, in the houses and in the streets, people were firing guns, discharging squibs and mortars. It lasted for two whole days. It sounded like a fight throughout Paris. I am glad it is all over, and that the city will resume its quiet.

Write to me very often, and tell me all you do ; your letters are too short. Give a kiss to your sister for me and love her well. Good-bye, sweet little dear ; think of your dear little mother, who sends you a million kisses.

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN, Nîmes.*

NOHANT, 26th September, 1831.

A seven days' journey is a desolation ; it worries me for a thousand reasons : first of all, because it tires you ; then, because that fortnight, lost in the most wearisome manner, must greatly grieve your mother. She will try to make up for the loss, I quite foresee. I could not, nor do I wish to cause her any pain. Yet, my dear boy, I should like you to be back about the twentieth of next month.

Therefore, derive all the advantage you can from those good days spent in your home and your native place. It is a blessing when one is neither *blasé* nor undeceived as to those two sweet things. Bring me some pebbles from your soil if they should display anything curious. Unless I dreamed it, you have some petrified marine shells, whose species we do not possess.



Maurice is not doing anything. I am not strict enough. As his time of license will not last long, I let him run about with Léontine, and working days are now scarce for him. The main point is that he must not forget what he has learned, and not that he should make progress without you. I wish, my dear boy, that the Latin studies were not quite so exclusive. You promised to begin history and to teach it on a par with geography on your return. Methinks those studies pushed on with a little rapidity might prove most useful to Maurice. Not that we must expect him to retain all the incidents at his age, but it is the only way of opening his ideas to the things of life, the laws, wars, vicissitudes of customs, constitutions, existence of nations, and progress of civilisation. That science ought therefore to relate only to the broad outlines. Instead of letting him grow mouldy over the minor wars and insignificant kings of many small states of ancient times, after the fashion that prevailed in the days of Abbé Rollin, universal history should be summed up in a course of lectures according to your method. That general analysis is not the work of a pedant, and its preparation will afford both advantage and pleasure to yourself. Later on, he doubtless will have to study the various parts of your edifice; that he can do by reading. For five or six years, I wrote extracts concerning all the dynasties of the earth. That was the teaching of history after the manner of the Jesuits. Many incidents, but not a reflection, not a thought, not a comment that had not in view the greater glory of God, despite truths and common sense. The result was that my worried brain did not retain anything of that twaddle. I lost five or six years of my life in learning nonsense.

Historical books, being all written under the impulse of some political passion or some religious prejudice, all require the rectification of a sound judgment. It is, therefore, not through the medium of books, but through your own reason and recollections that you should teach, is it not so, my boy?

Good-bye; I kiss you and your dear mother with all my heart. Make her very happy, and come back to us as soon as you are able, like Regulus, to withhold yourself from so much affection.

Maurice, too, sends you many kisses. He is pouting because he fell down and hurt his ——. Is it you who teach him to talk in that way?

*To MAURICE DUDEVANT, La Châtre.*

PARIS, 3rd November, 1831.

My dear little child, you do not say whether you received the toy which I sent you. If not, tell them at home to request M. Poplin\* to let you have it. He must have received it long ago.

When you have no more images to paint, you will let me know, and I will buy you some. Tell me if you want anything that I could send you. Boucoiran says that he is going to teach you history. You will tell me if you like the study. When I was a little girl it used to interest me much. I am very glad to learn that Sylvain Meillant† is better again; you must go and see him and tell him so on my behalf.

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\* Owner of property at La Châtre.

† A farmer at Nohant.

Have you put a roof on your little house in the yard? I used to build a good many, like yourself, in the same yard, with bricks and slates. I recollect that once, on opening the door of my house, which door was only a little piece of wood, I found *some one* in it. Guess who that *some one* was? A nice little mouse, who had taken up its quarters in my house and was comfortably settled in it. I let the poor thing stay, but do not know what became of it. And your garden, do you still work in it? The weather is very unfavourable now for playing out of doors. Take care not to catch cold. ) The weather is dreadful here. We are knee-deep in mud. The Seine is yellow, like coffee and milk. I go out of doors only when obliged to do so.

Good-bye, my dear little darling. I will send stockings to your big darling of a sister. Have you still enough stockings for the winter? I kiss you both. Farewell, and write to me often.

YOUR MOTHER.

*To THE SAME.*

PARIS, *November*, 1831.

Your letter is very nice, my little dear; it is very well written. Do not stay too long out of doors during this nasty cold weather; you see that you have already caught a cold. When in the garden you must run about and jump, and not stay in the same place. That is the way you always get ill. Your magpie can very well stay in the garden; it is not afraid of cold, its feathers protect it better than your coat and

trousers do you. Our little Bengalees are more delicate, they come from a warm climate. Tell Eugénie\* to take good care of them.

I went yesterday to the Zoological Gardens (Jardin des Plantes); I wish I could have brought away with me a little fallow gazelle, with white stripes and large black eyes, as a present for you. It eats out of one's hand; you would be very glad to have one like it, but you would have to keep it by the fireside. It hails from Africa, and the least cold will kill it. You have already seen gazelles, but you have probably forgotten all about them.

I should be so happy to have you here with me for a fortnight to take you about.

Good-bye, my little friend. I kiss you a thousand times, as also your big darling of a sister. See that she wears woollen stockings every day. Kiss Léontine and Boucoiran for me.

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN, Nohant.*

PARIS, 5th December, 1831.

Thanks, my dear boy. I do not know whether I shall be able to take advantage of that good opportunity to go back to Nohant. May it please God that my publisher may be able to pay me between now and the 8th proximo, and that I may deliver the last sheets of my manuscript to him. If so I shall be at Nohant soon. Do not speak about it yet. And above all do not cause Maurice any false joy, as there is nothing certain in my intentions. They depend entirely upon

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\* Housemaid.

a brute who daily promises the settlement of his debt, which I am still expecting. I wish that he would give me at least a three months' bill of exchange for the 500 francs. Up to the present I have not received anything, and should, naturally enough, object to having worked three months without adequate remuneration.

Maurice's letter, received the day before yesterday, is very good, provided you did not correct any of his mistakes. His writing, whenever he takes a little pains with it, promises to be very intelligible and very pretty. His young mind possesses some very original ideas; for instance, his magpie, which stands in the garden looking at people passing in the road, provoked my laughter.

Poor child! when will he be big enough to rely entirely upon himself? I shall have no trouble then in obtaining a consolation and a compensation for all the miseries of my life.

Good-bye, my dear son; remain always faithful to me; you whom I deem the steadiest and most generous of my friends.

I kiss you with all my heart.

*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN, Paris.*

NOHANT, 22nd February, 1832.

MY DEAR MAMMA,

My children easily got rid of their colds. Maurice is wilder, and Solange fresher and more rosy than ever. I hope to bring her to you next spring. She is reasonable enough now to take a trip to Paris with me; you will see how nice

and affectionate she is, but you will be frightened by her size; I wish she could grow a little taller, stout as she is.

Maurice works like a man. He becomes grave and studious, like his tutor; but at his recreation he takes his revenge. Léontine and he play the devil together. On Sunday we all play, children and grown-up people alike. Friends Maurice come from La Châtre, and I play blind-man's bluff, hunt the slipper, shuttlecock, and *prison bars* until my legs can no longer carry me. 'Polyte also indulges in the game he performs somersaults very nicely. He dances like Taglion and all at once drops heavily, to the great delight of Solange who calls him her jester of an uncle. If Oscar were here he would enjoy himself too.

I am very pleased that my book amuses you.\* I heartily accept your criticisms. If sister Olympe seems too soldier-like to you, that is her fault more than mine. I knew her well, and can assure you that, in spite of her swearing, she was the kindest and worthiest of women. At all events, I do not pretend to have been right in taking her as a model in the character of that personage. The fact of a thing being true does not always justify its being divulged; I therefore acknowledge that there may have been bad taste in the choice. Besides, I told you that the production is not wholly my own. It contains many vulgar jests of which I disapprove. I tolerate them only in order to satisfy my publisher, who wanted something rather *spicy*. You may give that answer to exonerate me in Caroline's eyes, if the broadness of the expressions should scandalise her. I also dislike indecent jokes. You will not find any in the book which I am now writing, and for the production of which I shall only borrow

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\* Entitled, *Rose et Blanche*.

my collaborator's name ; my own name not being destined to be ever associated with the career of a *bel esprit*.

I am not exclusively engaged on that work. Now I can take it easily, without worrying myself. If I sometimes work with all my might, it is that I cannot leave anything half done ; once begun, I must finish it. I am like yourself with your drawings and varnishes. I have many pleasant distractions here ; Maurice is now jumping on my back, and my big daughter climbing on my knees.

Good night, my dear little mother. Let me hear how your eye is getting on. For the purpose of curing it too quickly, do not interfere with it too much. Kiss Caroline and old friend Pierret for me. I love you with all my heart.

*To MAURICE DUDEVANT, Nohant.*

PARIS, 4th April, 1832.

We arrived here in good health, your sister and myself, my dear little love. Solange slept all the way from Châteaunoux. She thought of you and her maid, and twice cried for you, but soon got over it. At her age grief cannot last. She was nice and good all the time. When as young as her you were not so patient. When we reached home she at once recognised your portrait and cried ; afterwards she soon went off to sleep.

I took her to the Luxembourg and the Jardin des Plantes. She saw the giraffe, and maintained having already seen it in a field at Nohant. She fed with her own hand the little kids from Thibet and the cranes. She saw some stuffed

beasts, and cannot still understand that they are dead. Besides she is not at all frightened ; so long as I hold her by the hand she is not afraid of anything.

She laughs and sings, and is charmingly pretty. She eats enough for six, and goes to sleep in the omnibus ; she wakes up on alighting, and walks alone without grumbling. It is impossible for any child to be better. I am very glad to have her with me. If you also were here, my dear boy, I should be perfectly happy.

How are you getting on, my dear little pup ? Do you still enjoy yourself much ? Is your crane still alive ?

Good-bye, my sweet little angel. I give you a hundred thousand kisses on your rosy cheeks, your big snout, your large eyes, and your fine silky hair. Write to me very often. Your sister kisses you, too ; she intends to bring you strawberries and ice in a piece of paper. They will be in a fine state when they arrive !

*TO THE SAME.*

PARIS, 4th May, 1832.

MY SWEET DARLING,

We are quite well. Your sister is very good now. We still take walks to the Luxembourg and the Jardin des Plantes. The latter is lovely and quite fragrant with acacia blossoms. Nohant must look very nice by this time. Have you many flowers ? How does your garden look ? Mine here is composed of a dozen flower-pots on my balcony ; my plants have grown some new offshoots as long as one's hand. Solange often breaks some of them, and, in order not to get scolded, tries to mend them with wafers.



We talk about you night and morning, when going to bed and when getting up. I dreamed last night that you were as tall as myself. I did not know you. You came to kiss me, and I was so happy that I cried. On waking up I found your big sister, who, having clambered on to my bed, was kissing me. She is taller now, and thinner too. Nobody will believe her to be only five years old. She is a head taller than any child of her age.

All the sweets which people give her she puts by for you, but an hour afterwards she forgets all about it and eats them. When coming to see you we will bring you some.

Good-bye, my darling little child. Write oftener if possible, and longer letters than you usually send. You do not say what Boucoiran is teaching you. Farewell, I kiss you with all my heart.

*TO THE SAME.*

PARIS, 17th May, 1832.

MY LITTLE DEAR,

I received your two letters. I sent you a big one, full of drawings. Do you like copying them? What do you do in the evening? Do you study in your room, or do you run about the garden with Léontine? Are you still fond of waltzing? Tell me how you spend the days. Tell me all you do from the morning when you get up until you go to bed.

Your little sister is quite well; she begins to get used to Paris, and wants to have things too much her own way. Up to the present moment she has been so surprised by all she has seen, that she has not thought of having whims. Now, she has many; but I do not give way to her, and,

after pouting awhile, she forgets all her troubles. Some children, who live on the same balcony as ourselves, make fun of her by aping her whenever she cries. That sorely annoys her; she then dries her tears, and dares not say any more.

It is a long time since we went to the country; it rains every day, and the weather is so cold that we always have a fire. I have two little green canaries in a cage. They laid some eggs, which were hatched this morning. I wish you could see how delighted Solange is! she cannot understand it, and would like to put the little birds in her pocket. They are so small, shrivelled up, and lean, so skinny and ugly. They might be killed by merely blowing on them.

We also have a fine garden on our balcony; roses, jessamine, lilac, wallflowers, orange trees, one geranium, some mignonette, and even a black-currant bush full of fruit. If you come this summer I will let you eat them, although you have plenty far better at Nohant. Solange takes pleasure in putting turf in pots, wherein she sows seeds; as soon as they shoot she pulls them out.

Good-bye, my big darling. Write to me often. Acquaint me with your amusements, etc., and think often of your old mother who loves you.

*To M. CHARLES DUVERNET, La Châtre.*

PARIS, 6th July, 1832.

So, dear comrade, you are on the point of getting married!

As good and bad do not exist of themselves, as happiness

or misfortune are only relative (only proceed from the ideas which we form of them), you must be satisfied since you believe yourself to be so. It only remains for me to rejoice with you over the event which causes you delight, and at the choice which you have made. I am not acquainted with your affianced bride; but I have heard everybody speak of her in the highest terms, and especially so Mademoiselle Decerf—a sound and reliable judge. You will return to your wife all the happiness she will bring you. In any case, rest assured that your happiness will double mine.

I only have time to write a few lines. I am running about from morning till night in order to find suitable lodgings. At night I return home tired out with walking in the heat, and on those confounded paving-stones. With much regret I am on the point of quitting my nice little garret on the Quai Saint Michel; the bad state of my health forbidding my ascending, several times in the course of a day, a staircase five storeys high, I intend taking up my abode in some quarter still more remote from the fashionable parts of Paris. I yesterday went to Aulnay, and called upon Henri de Latouche. He scarcely ever comes to town. His *hermitage* is the most delightful place I know. I do not know whether he is doing anything there. As for me, I am not and do not intend resuming my literary pursuits before returning to Nohant. I feel rather nervous at the success secured by *Indiana*.\* I never expected anything of the kind, I only hoped to work unnoticed without ever deserving any attention. The Fates have ordained it otherwise. It now rests upon me to justify the undeserved admiration of which I am the object. That makes me rather

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\* Title of one of George Sand's novels.

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weary of my profession. It seems to me that I shall no longer enjoy writing.

Good-bye, old fellow ; I will write again some other time. To-day I only congratulate you and kiss you affectionately.

*To MAURICE DUDEVANT, Nohant.*

PARIS, 8th July, 1832.

MY DARLING,

A short time ago, I wrote to tell you how anxious I felt about you. I had scarcely posted my letter when yours reached me. Your drawing is very pretty. Solange examined it attentively ; she recognised it at once. She learns to read, and already knows all the sounds. It amuses her. Were I to listen to her we should do nothing but read all day ; but she would soon grow weary of it. I am sparing of the pleasure it affords her. If she continues, as at present, she will know how to read much earlier in life than you did. At seven years of age, you were yet very backward ; do you still recollect it ? Thank goodness, you have made up for loss of time. Are you very diligent ? Tell me what you are doing at present ; are you studying Greek history ? Are you still fond of Latin ?

We went to Franconi's,\* Solange and I. We were in the front, close to the horses. She saw the fights, the galloping horses, the two elephants who climbed over boards close by her. She was not frightened ; she patted the animals, laughed in the actors' faces, and enjoyed herself very much. Only, when the big elephant stepped in, carrying upon his

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\* A circus in Paris.

back a tower full of fireworks and squibs, which went off with an infernal noise, she rather winced. I told her that if you were there you would not be afraid; that you sometimes practise pistol firing; that the elephant takes no notice of the noise going on. She then dried up her tears and ventured to look on. She thought it very fine. Indeed, it is scarcely possible to imagine anything more gorgeous than the elephant covered with velvet and gold, carrying soldiers, and moving [about amidst the firing like a regular soldier.

I missed you much, dear boy; you would have been quite surprised to witness the sagacity of those elephants. One of them is enormous, fully four times as big as the one that you saw at the Jardin des Plantes. But, instead of being of a dirty gray colour like the latter, he is of a fine black. His name is Jack; the young one is about one-third Jack's size, but as nice as an elephant can be and as clever as the big one. All their performances are truly incredible. They appear on three different occasions. Thomas\* is certainly not gifted with one-fourth of their intelligence. The big one performs the scarf-dance with about thirty *bayadères*. It is enough to split one's sides to see an elephant dance! He then eats salad before the public. Every time he has emptied a bowl he takes it with his trunk and passes it to the little one, who takes hold of it in like fashion and, I was going to say, hands it over to his groom. The larger animal carries a golden bell, hanging from a rope. He catches hold of the latter and rings until another bowl of salad is brought in. The performance represents an Indian prince, whom his enemies pursue in order to kill. Having caught him, they

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\* Cowherd at Nohant.

put him in prison ; but the elephant tears out the iron bar of the window, places his back close to it, and carries the prince away. In another scene the prince is shut up in a box, which his enemies intend to throw into the sea. The elephant opens the box with his trunk, and fetches some cherries, which he brings to the prince. He distributes letters, beats the drum, offers nosegays to the ladies, kneels, and lies down, and squats, all without the interference of his keeper. He is quite uncontrolled ; enters caverns, passes out through the proper exits, and never makes any mistake. No *figurant* could ever be better acquainted with his business. When the performance is ended, the audience calls him back, and the curtain is drawn again. After delaying awhile, as is customary with actresses who are anxious for admirers, both elephants step in, wave their trunks about in acknowledgment of the public, kneel down and retire, vociferously applauded, and evidently quite satisfied with themselves. Solange says they are very nice darlings. She also went to see the performances of the marionettes, at Seraphin's ; but she prefers those of horses and elephants.

Good-bye, my little love. When you come to Paris I will take you to see all that. I am making a pair of slippers for you. I send you some pictures which some one gave me for you. Farewell, my child ; kiss your papa and Boucoiran for me. Solange kisses you all, as also her "Titine."\* When at Franconi's she said to me :

"I say, mamma, you must tell my little brother all about that ; for I myself could not explain it, it is too good !"

I send you a thousand kisses. Love me well, and write to me.

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\* Short for Léontine.

*To M. FRANCOIS ROLLINAT, Châteauroux.*

NOHANT, 20th August, 1832.

DEAR OLD FELLOW,

I have been working like a horse, and am so pleased at my day's work being over, that, far from indulging melancholy, I am, as it were, sleeping myself into the blissful indifference which I am at last permitted to enjoy. Do not, therefore, expect that I shall reply to all the good and excellent things which you write to me. I shall do so some other day when I have a fuller control over my mind, some day when I have a *soul* like Othello. As for to-day, I feel I am all animal. I say life is only fit to be squandered. All I possessed of heart and energy, I entrusted to sheets of Weynen \* paper. My mind is gone to *press*, my faculties are in the hands of the *reader*. What a dreadful calling is mine! Whenever I have been engaged in it, my brains feel empty at night. Those are days when I am not allowed to live for myself. After all, it is perhaps for my good; for, abandoned to myself, I might enjoy life too much.

In a couple of days I shall have finished *Valentine*,† or else I shall be dead. Do you wish me to call upon you next week? If so, fix the day. If agreeable to you, we shall go to Valencay. What do you say about it? I have got the whole month to myself to run about, but the cold weather will soon set in. If you take my advice, we had better get ready to start with the first sunny days that may yet beam on us during this season. I will let Gustave ‡ know. Reply then, fixing the day; not being free as to your time, it is better that you

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A kind of foolscap paper. † Title of one of George Sand's novels.

‡ Gustave Papet.

should decide upon the arrangements. But you must let us know beforehand, so that we may get ready all the necessaries for a journey.

I am delighted to hear that a kind welcome awaits me in your family ; I am very anxious to see all the children ; I am particularly fond of Juliette.\* You must inform your mother and grown-up sisters that I am very ill-bred, that I can scarcely constrain myself more than an hour at a time ; that, like Baron de Corbigny, when not under restraint, "I cannot refrain *from* swearing and tippling." It cannot be helped ! Everybody has his own little failings, as used to say I know not who, when boiling his father's head in order to eat it. At any rate, take care not to tell your people that I am presentable. Were I to be called upon to keep up the dignity of my part afterwards, I should suffer too much.

Please be good enough to send me a box of wafers, the smallest you can get. Considering the gorgeous and magnificent presents which I have made to you, you may well afford the gift of a box of wafers ! Otherwise, I shall be compelled to send you my letters open. At La Châtre they are unacquainted with the use of wafers. They replace them with Burgundy pitch. They also manufacture there some very celebrated kinds of cheese ; the inhabitants are most affable, etc. (See the *Voyage de l'Astrolabe*.)†

Farewell, dear brother of my heart ; I shall write whenever I can. As for you, if you can spare the time, write to me. You know what affection I entertain towards your little body and great mind ! ‡

GEORGE.

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\* Juliette Rollinat, sister of François Rollinat.

† A work purporting to be the description of a journey round the world.

‡ François Rollinat was rather diminutive in size.



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*To MAURICE DUDEVANT, Nohant.*

PARIS, 6th December, 1832.

MY SWEET CHILD,

We arrived here yesterday without any mishap, and scarcely feel any fatigue to-day. We are quite refreshed after our night's rest. Your sister is sprightly, fresh, and lovely. Everybody thinks her improved in looks and a regular darling. The *little woman*\* bore the journey very patiently. She seems totally unconcerned at any of the new things which meet her gaze; she paid no attention whatever to either buildings or people while going through Paris. Should she continue as she now is, I shall be well satisfied with her; for she does really all she can in order to be useful to me.

I have nothing new to tell you; all my time has been taken up with sleeping and putting my rooms in order. Your little sister kisses you. She thought of you when at Châteauroux, and began to cry. I asked her what was the matter. She replied that she wanted to go and fetch her darling of a brother. I took her to Rollinat's, where we dined; his little sisters consoled her, and she began to romp about thoughtlessly.

Good-bye, my little darling; kiss your father for me; tell your uncle not to overtax his brains. Tell him also that I travelled in the company of the famous Father Bouffard, one of the leading *Saint-Simonians*. The dear old man is no bigger than you; he eats only cold eggs and drinks water. He is, nevertheless, very amiable, and seems very kind-hearted.

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\* Nickname of a young country girl brought to Paris by George Sand.

He resembles Jocko \* so much that he might be mistaken for him. Do you recollect Jocko?

Farewell; write to me, study hard, take care of your health, and think of me. I kiss you a thousand times, my poor darling; you know whether I love you!

YOUR MOTHER.

*To M. JULES BOUÇOIRAN, La Châtre.*

PARIS, 20th December, 1832.

MY DEAR BOY,

I did not reply to your letter for a very good reason: I do not know what you wish me to do. You must therefore write again, and explain yourself more fully.

You are taking great care of Maurice. I am very grateful to you for it, and beseech you to continue watching him closely.

Prevent his going out in wet weather. He is so subject to sore throat that I feel quite uneasy about him. Do your best to prevent his having another this winter. When he is here next spring I shall take the necessary steps to rid him of his tonsils. The operation is very simple, so I hear.

I am living here like a hermit. My apartment is so nice and warm; it is so light and quiet that I never care to leave it. But, on the other hand, I am all day long bothered with visitors, who are not all very entertaining. It is one of the drawbacks of my calling, and I am obliged to put up with them; but in the evening I shut myself up with my pen and ink, Solange, my piano, and my fire. In their midst I spend

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\* The name of a monkey.

some very pleasant hours. The only sounds I hear are the notes of a harp proceeding I know not whence, and the plashing of a jet of water which plays in the garden under my windows. It is most poetic. Do not laugh about it.

I must tell you that I am coining money. I receive proposals from all directions.

I shall sell my next novel for 4,000 francs. It is more than I expected; I am so stupid. The *Revue de Paris* and the *Revue des Deux Mondes* fought over my work. I finally bound myself to the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for a sum of 4,000 francs; thirty pages of writing every six weeks. *La Marquise* \* proved a great success, and completed the advantages of my position.

I can no longer afford the time to watch my life rolling by. To me, whose heart is not jovial, the obligation of working is a great blessing. Solange herself brings me more happiness than all the rest. During the last four months her loveliness and intelligence have much improved. I am of opinion that study has hastened the development of her young intellect. She reads very well, fully comprehending the rules which you set before her. I now understand why she makes so few mistakes. She makes them very seldom indeed.

Tell me, my dear boy, what I can do for you. I cannot guess. Keep me well informed respecting Maurice and yourself.

Farewell; I kiss you with all my heart.

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\* Title of one of George Sand's novels.

*To MAURICE DUDEVANT, La Châtre.*

PARIS, 11th January, 1833.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I have received many letters from you, which, being ill, I was unable to answer. I only leave my bed to-day. I was suffering from a very bad cold and with intense fever. The weather is bitterly cold, and everybody is coughing. Your sister also has a cold. To make matters worse, we have had a serious chimney fire. I was obliged to rush to Solange's bed, to let the firemen put out the fire which had broken out in my own room. They stopped the conflagration, or at least thought so, and spoiled my carpet. The next day a sweep-boy ascended the flue; the poor thing burned his chest, rather slightly though. The fire was still smouldering! Although no fire had been lighted since the accident, the soot was still burning. We had great trouble in extinguishing it. I was accordingly turned out of my room for several days, and obliged to sleep in one without a fire.

Take care not to catch cold during this bitter weather; keep your feet very warm and your throat wrapped up. I am very glad that you are pleased with your albums. I wish it were March now, I could then go about shopping with you, and pat you on your bright cheeks. That time will soon come.

Good-bye, sweet darling; be good, diligent, and take care of your health. I and your big sister kiss you affectionately. She is talking about you all day long. You are always her beloved darling.

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN, La Châtre.*

PARIS, 18th January, 1833.

MY DEAR BOY,

I found it impossible to reply sooner to your question. It seemed to me so devoid of importance that it quite slipped my memory. Once my husband told me of your intended return to Madame Bertrand's. I inquired from you whether you really contemplated leaving us; you replied in the negative. I felt satisfied. I do not remember having had any other conversation with my husband concerning you. If you should wish to dissuade him, are you not well able to do so, since you see him every day?

Your reproaches are very serious, my dear boy. Emanating from you, such reproaches constitute a grievance more serious still for me against you. You rebuke me on account of my numerous *liaisons*, my frivolous friendships. I never undertake to clear myself from imputations bearing on my character. I can explain facts and actions, but I must decline discussing defects of mind or failings of heart. I possess too sound an opinion of the little worth of all men (and women too, for the matter of that) to hold myself in any high esteem. Besides, in my inmost soul I neither worship nor revere myself. I therefore leave the field undisputed to those who wish to depreciate my merits. I am even quite ready to laugh over my faults with those people who appeal to my philosophy; but if what you express is a matter of affection, the suffering of a friendly heart, you are wrong. When we discover great blots in the souls of those whom we love, we should carefully consider whether we ought to love them still in spite of the

discovery. The most sensible course to pursue is to give them up, the most generous to retain them. But in order that our generosity should be delicate and complete, we must not tell them the truth, for that would be cruel. All reproaches which only relate to facts of slight importance or to defects easily remedied, the giving of affectionate warnings, fond advices and delicate complaints, all, I know, belong to the province of friendship. They are indeed its noblest privileges. But to taunt one with an already distant past, to consider silently errors which we judge and do not forgive, and to condemn them when too late and when past remedy, I say it is unjust. To say to our friend, "Your heart is cold, light, or powerless!" is harsh, is cruel!

It is gratuitously inflicting a humiliation; in so acting we cause needless suffering without improving the object of our reproaches. Hardened hearts cannot be softened, used-up hearts do not grow younger, hearts incomplete meet neither with sympathy nor pity. If that is to be my fate it is very unkind to point it out to me.

You add in your letter that I must many a time have suffered from your temper. Did I ever make any mention of it? Have I wounded in you that about which all men are most sensitive, self-esteem? Never! I am too well aware that we must throw a veil of forgiveness and oblivion over the imperfections of those who are dear to us.

Good-bye, my dear boy. Let me hear from Maurice and yourself as soon as possible. I kiss you with all my heart.

*To MAURICE DUDEVANT, Nohant.*

PARIS, 27th February, 1833.

You say, my dear child, that I do not write to you often. It is yourself, lazy little monkey, who do not display any promptness in your replies. You write, too, such short little notes. I should be so delighted to know all about your doings: how you enjoy yourself, how you work, how you sleep. Thank goodness! I shall soon know all about it. Tell your father to let me know when he intends to start, so that I may meet the coach. I shall put you in my warm bed; your big sister will kiss you heartily; she now calls you her little treasure of a brother; she is as lovely and nice as ever and very amusing.

She was quite grieved this morning: she dropped her doll in the garden, and the dogs tore it to pieces. When she went to pick it up, there only remained a leg which the dog had been unable to digest. So the poor dear bawled out like a calf.

Farewell, my dear little love; kiss everybody for me I kiss you on your rosy cheeks. Good-bye, little darling.

I have got a lovely little gray cat, which came to us over the roofs. I took him in; he is very good-natured.

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN, La Châtre.*

PARIS, 6th March, 1833.

MY DEAR BOY,

You are on the point of doing something very noble or very foolish. Very noble if, owing to you, the young

woman cannot any longer dispose of herself; very foolish, if you simply follow an inclination.

I am requested to stop you on the brink of the abyss. I can scarcely believe that, having gone so far, you can stand in need of any advice. Your motives must be very powerful for accepting so binding a tie with a person so much beneath you. You are too hasty. Be careful, my friend, do not precipitate the issue.

Even if she were the most opulent, the handsomest, and wittiest of women, I should still beg of you to wait and reflect. In that, I am not giving way to public opinion or prejudice. I shall, perhaps, be the only one who will not throw stones at you; but still I am full of apprehension as regards your future. You are so young, and will have so much to do in order to raise that woman to your level! I dare not tell you all the disappointments I foresee for you. I am afraid of wounding your heart, engaged as it is in so delicate a matter. Yet I beseech you not to be hasty. Why not put off this affair until after your journey to Paris? There your eyes might possibly become opened to many drawbacks, which perhaps have not yet struck you. If you should be so bound by promise or duty as to be unable to retrace your steps, you would thus at least be guarded against the future, and better prepared to brave it courageously.

In all things, it is your precipitation which makes me so uneasy. I feel sure that your resolution is dictated by austere principles and noble feelings. I, therefore, do not judge you with irony or harshness. I do not even judge you at all, my boy; but I fret on account of your position. It is possible that you may never have any cause to regret your choice, it is also possible that it may be the means



of making you miserable ever after. I am fully aware that those considerations will never induce you to shrink from the performance of a duty. But if, however anxious to secure the happiness of another, you were only to succeed in aggravating her situation! That has often been the case; married life is a state so contrary to any kind of union and happiness, that my fears are quite justified.

If you possess the same affection for me which I feel for you, you will take three months to consider the matter. I expect that from you as a proof of the already old friendship which exists between us. Will you grant my request? I am afraid that your seclusion has wrought upon your ideas, and that you are exaggerating the importance of duties which, under calmer and normal circumstances, would appear in quite a different light to you. Will not your mother be grieved at such a prompt resolution? Have you consulted her? Will the person about whom we are talking prove herself fit and agreeable society for your mother? All that seems very doubtful to me.

I do not find fault with you for not having taken my advice, but the mystery with which you have surrounded your intentions does not seem to me a very favourable augury. Have you fully agreed with yourself as to the course which you are going to pursue?

Farewell, my boy, I kiss you. Reply to me.

*To MADAME MAURICE DUPIN, Paris.*

PARIS, May, 1833.

MY DEAR MAMMA,

You are wrong to scold me. I have had only worry and anxiety, instead of all the pleasures which you suppose. Both my children have been ill and are still poorly : Maurice has had a nasty attack of *grippe*\* and Solange of whooping-cough. I spend all my time going from my house to the Collège Henri IV. and *vice versa*; for I could not get my son home before the disease broke out. He was nursed by kind nuns in the infirmary.

Solange, though still cheerful and good, is very tired, and so am I.

One evening when both my children were better, I called at your house to thank you for the fine engraving which you sent me. It was seven o'clock, not an unwarrantable hour. Yet you were not at home. Since then I have been unable to leave my rooms, except to go to the Collège Henri IV.

I intend calling on you to-morrow. To-day it is utterly impossible. You were wrong in giving way to your dignity as an offended mother; since you always go out to dinner, you should have come to taste my cooking. I always have some dainty little dish to offer you. At six we might have gone together to see Maurice at the college, that would have made me very happy.

Farewell, dear mother; I kiss you with all my heart, expect that you will forgive, and hope that you will not any longer be *naughty* with me!

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\* Popular name of an epidemical kind of catarrh.

*To M. CASIMIR DUDEVANT, Nohant.*

PARIS, 20th May, 1833.

MY FRIEND,

I am pleased to hear that you had a safe journey and arrived in good health.

Maurice has been in the infirmary. The change of diet tries him a little; but otherwise he is quite fresh-looking and cheerful. His masters are satisfied with his disposition, and he seems to be on good terms with his school-fellows. As for his progress, it cannot yet be very apparent. I hope that, on your return, it will be more visible. I told him to write to you. In any case, I shall let you know how he is getting on. I saw him yesterday, with my mother; he was as nice as usual. I do not know whether Salmon's business is bad this month; but, though I did not send for my money until the fifteenth of May, it was with the utmost difficulty that I could prevail upon him to pay me. I had to send for it on four different occasions. The first time, my messenger was refused admittance by him; the second time, he had changed his hour of reception; when calling the third time, the messenger was informed that Salmon had no ready cash: the fourth time, he at last deigned to send my monthly allowance. I cannot say whether all that was the result of mere chance; it is quite possible. Still, I think that you ought to bear it in mind, in case you intend to deposit any sum of importance with him. On the other hand, you ought to instruct him to send me my money on the first day of each month. A business man is neither an ambassador nor a minister, that people should have to wait for him.

Good-bye, my dear friend. Your big daughter kisses you. Give my kindest love to Duteil and Jules Néraud, when you see them. Good-bye, I kiss you.

*To M. FRANCOIS ROLLINAT, Châteauroux.*

PARIS, 26th May, 1833.

DEAR FRIEND,

You do not, I hope, suppose that I have altered my opinion. You are still, in my eyes, the best and most honest of men. The silence which I have observed for several months may have caused you to wonder whether I was not dead, or, if still an inmate of this world, had not forgotten all about you. It is that I feel as wearied as though I had lived for centuries; it is that, since I wrote to you last, I have had a *hellish* time of it. Socially speaking, I am free and happier. Outwardly, my position is calm, independent, and rather advantageous. But you do not know what fearful storms I have had to face, in order to reach that point. It would take many evening walks through the stately avenues of Nohant, under the bright shining stars, in the midst of that grand and solemn silence of which we were so fond, for me to tell you all the particulars of my trials. May it please God that we may, once more, enjoy those blessed times, and together again admire the reflection of the moonlight in the waterfalls of Urmont!

I ought to take advantage of and enjoy that independence so dearly paid for, but I am no longer capable of it. My heart has grown older by twenty years, and life seems to possess no more attractions for me. The passions and joys of this world are no longer meant for me. I have read the book

of life. I have doubled the Cape. I am in port, not indeed like those good nabobs who rest in silken hammocks, under the cedar ceilings of their palaces, but like the poor pilots who, overwhelmed with fatigue and scorched by the fierce sun, are anchored and can no longer venture out to sea in their damaged boats. They have no means of living on shore, and, besides, life ashore is dull. They, in the past, led a jolly life, full of adventures and combats; they had many love affairs and plenty of riches. They would like to resume the calling of their choice; but their ships are dismasted, their cargoes lost; they must run aground and remain there!

I have no doubt that all this fine poetry will enable you to form a fair estimate of the true state of my brains. Do I deserve more pity now than in the past? Perhaps; calm which proceeds from powerlessness is a very dull consolation.

With you, it is a different matter. Reason, force, and will placed you where you are. You, therefore, possess in yourself serious enjoyments and noble consolations.

I will, before long, send you a long letter; that letter is a book\* which I have written since we parted. It is an endless chat between us two. We are indeed the most important personages therein. As for the others, you will have to make them out as best you can. That book will enable you to fathom the depth of my soul, as also that of your own. I therefore do not reckon the present lines as a letter. You are with me and in my thoughts at all times. When reading my production, you will easily perceive that what I now say is correct.

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\* *Lélia*, one of George Sand's most celebrated novels.

Good-bye, friend ; write to me, give me many particulars about yourself, your family, and the austere cares of your grand, noble, and sad life. I shall see you in a month or two. Farewell ; believe me for life yours.

MERCANTILE LIBRARY  
— \* —

Your friend,

GEORGE SAND.

OF NEW YORK.

*To M. ADOLPHE GUÉROULT, Paris.*

PARIS, 3rd June, 1833.

SIR,

You have been so kind and obliging to me, that, despite the long time which has elapsed without bringing me any news or any call from you, I do not hesitate to solicit your kindness once more. I have just written a book, entitled *Lélia*, for which I need your aid. If you will be good enough to call upon me, we will talk it over, and I will request the continuation of your kind offices *vivâ voce*.

Will you come and dine with me to-morrow ? I have much to tell you respecting that rather entangled work, and as regards some possible obstacles to its success ; but I am only free at about five o'clock. May I rely upon you ?

I am, Sir, yours, etc.

*To MADAME \* \* \**

PARIS, July, 1833.

MADAME,

I feel rather embarrassed by your questions. I am particularly anxious to retain your esteem ; I cannot, however, resolve to speak against my conscience in order to

do so. I am very selfish and careless, you compel me to confess it. I do not know what exterior influences may have to do with my indifference respecting Saint-Simonism; I believe they have nothing to do with it. I further believe that I never intended to raise an argument for or against society, in *Valentine* or in *Indiana*.\* Forgive my saying so, or anathematise me for it, I cannot help stating that society is the least of the things which I hate or despise. Man left to his instinct does not appear to me less ugly, ridiculous, and mean than man trained to walk on his hind feet. I cannot help its being so! And then, besides a misanthropy which is growing with age, I am thoroughly a woman as regards ignorance, inconsistency of ideas, and my absolute want of logic. You very truly remark that I am deficient in precision and that there is no sequence in my mind; but, believe me, that is no sign of superiority. It is the infirmity of a weakly and lame nature. I have not studied anything, I do not know anything, not even my own tongue. My brains are so devoid of exactitude, that I never succeeded in doing the most simple rule of arithmetic. With that you may judge whether I can be of service to any one, and light upon any correct and useful idea. You are far above me in all respects, notably as regards reason, intellect, and knowledge. I only have sensations and no will. What would be the use of my having any? Beyond two or three persons, the world has no existence for me. You see that I am good for nothing; but you, you are fit for anything, and, thanks to your talent and your character, you do not want my help. I

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\* Titles of two of George Sand's novels.

therefore request your indulgence and compassion for my social nullity, and your friendship to console me. Can you only love minds that are great and strong? Mine is not so; but I admire what is different from myself. The privilege of powerful natures is to pity and console those who are beneath them. Do good to women in general by your zeal and warmth of heart. Do good to me in particular by your meekness and your tolerance.

Good-bye, madame; may you soon return!

I am, yours,

G. S.

*To M. MAURICE DUDEVANT, Collège Henri IV., Paris.*

MARSEILLES, 18th December, 1833.

MY LITTLE DEAR,

I am at Marseilles, having travelled all the time, either by coach or by boat, since the day I left you. I came down the Rhône by the steamboat, and am about to go by sea to Italy. I shall not stay there long, so do not fret. The state of my health compels me to spend some little time in a warm climate. I shall return to *you* as soon as possible. You know full well that I do not like to live away from my little darlings, so nice both of them, and whom I love more than anything in this world. I wish you were here with me, I should take you wherever I go. But your sister is not old enough, and as for yourself, you must complete your education.

You know, my dear boy, how indispensable that is, and have quite made up your mind, I am sure, to attend to it



in all earnest. I was very happy when M. Gaillard\* told me that you were a good boy, doing your utmost to give satisfaction to your masters, and that he had a very good opinion of you. I hope that people will always have to speak about you in that way. You have never caused me any grief so far, and if you continue thus you will be the blessing of my life.

I went this morning for a walk on the beach. I ate some live shellfish, whose shells were extremely pretty. I thought about you, who are so fond of them, but I did not pick any from the sand because you were not there to help me, and it would not have amused me. When you are old enough to leave college and interrupt your studies, we shall travel together. Do you remember that we have already made two journeys together, and that we enjoyed ourselves like two regular comrades? We were not either of us afraid of anything; we ate like wolves, and you slept on my knees like a big marmot.

Until we can do so again, make haste and learn what everybody should know. Enjoy yourself as much as you like. When out on a holiday be kind and amiable towards my mother and Madame Dudevant. Do not forget to thank Boucoiran, who is so good and obliging to you, and write to me every holiday. Tell me all you are doing, where you sleep, etc. Tell me also whether you get *good marks*. Think of me often, and work, play, jump about. Good-bye, keep your little nose tidy, your paws clean, do not be too greedy, and love well your old mother, who kisses you a hundred thousand times.

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\* Head Master of the "Collège Henri IV."

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN, Paris.*

MARSEILLES, 20th December, 1833.

MY DEAR BOY,

I arrived here without being overfatigued, and shall leave the day after to-morrow. I am going to Pisa or to Naples, I do not know which. Write to me to Livourne, *poste restante*. Give me some news about my boy. Be as kind as ever towards him, and protect him against the little troubles which I mentioned to you.

Did you succeed in dining on the day of my departure? That was a day of hard work for you. But for you, I do not believe I could have managed to start. Have you been good enough to put everything in order at my place, to discharge my maids, to close doors and windows, etc., etc.? Take care not to leave the keys about, but make a parcel of them, which please put in my *escritoire*, which you will lock, taking the key with you. I also entrust you with the supervision of the rats and mice, on which I authorise you to feed as much as you please, as also to drink all the wine in my cellar.

By-the-bye, you must also be good enough to sometimes pay visits to the aforesaid cellar in order to keep an eye on my bottles, so as to preclude any sympathy between the said bottles and the gullets of the flunkies and porters.

Please to keep an account of all the expenses incurred on my account, such as theatres to which you take Maurice, the postage of letters, etc., etc.

Your country is very fine all along the Rhône. A sail down that river is most enjoyable. As for your cities of Lyons, Avignon, and Marseilles, they are simply stupid. I

should not like to live in them, and thank heaven that I shall soon be out of them. Marseilles is exactly as you depicted it to me. You must walk a league before seeing the sea, and the harbour looks pretty much like the duck-pond at Nohant.

But the weather here is delightful, and the mornings quite as fine as our afternoons in April.

Good-bye, my dear friend. I especially request you to give me news of my boy, and to fill my place towards him. I really do not know how I could manage my life, had I not your kind friendship and everlasting kindness to help and comfort me.

Farewell. I kiss you.

AURORE.

*To M. HIPPOLYTE CHATIRON, Paris.*

VENICE, 16th March, 1834.

FRIEND,

Thanks for your letter. I am always delighted to hear about you. My reply was delayed owing to a rather serious illness, from which I am now quite recovered. Just on the point of leaving Italy, I begin to get acclimatised to it. I shall come again, for, having once tasted of that country, one feels as though expelled from Paradise when going back to France. Such is, at least, the feeling it causes me.

I do not think much of Tuscany, but Venice is the finest city in the world. What could we wish for better than its Moorish architecture in white marble in the midst of the limpid waters, and under a truly magnificent sky ; its people so gay, so heedless, so witty, and fond of music ; its

gondolas, churches and picture galleries ; those good-looking and elegant women ; the murmurs of the sea breaking upon the ear ; moonlights nowhere else to be seen ; choruses of gondoliers, sometimes very correct, serenading under every window ; cafés full of Turks and Armenians ; fine and spacious theatres where you can hear Pasta and Donzelli ; gorgeous palaces ; a Punch and Judy show far above that of Gustave Malus ; delicious oysters, which you can gather on the steps of every house ; Cyprian wine at twenty-five *sous* a bottle ; capital chickens for ten *sous* ; flowers in the heart of winter, and, in the month of February, a heat as great as that of our month of May ?

I have not made myself acquainted with the other winter pleasures. As you know, I do not like society. I limited my company to two or three excellent persons, and witnessed the Carnival from my window.

It appeared to me to be much beneath its reputation. I ought to have seen it at the masked balls, or at the theatres ; but I was ill at the time, and unable to go. I am not very sorry for it ; for I met with what I wanted : a fine climate, a profusion of artistic works, a free and calm life, time to work, and—friends. Unfortunately, I cannot build my nest on that branch, for my little ones are away, and I can only like the place for a time. I am waiting for the month of April before again crossing the Alps, when I intend passing through Geneva. I therefore expect to be in Paris in the course of next month.

I want to kiss Maurice before going to spend the summer in Berry. Tell Casimir to keep Solange at home, and not to send her to school before my return ; that would prevent my going to Nohant, and interfere greatly with the economical way in which I intend to rest myself.

You do not appear quite as delighted with La Châtre as I with Venice. Your description of its inhabitants is rather ludicrous. What a silly thing society is, to be sure! Love of work is a great boon. I bless the memory of my grandmother, for having compelled me to acquire the habit of it. That habit has become a faculty, which itself is for me a necessity. I have now reached such a point that I can, without injuring my health, work for thirteen hours in succession, although the average is from seven to eight hours a day, whether the work be difficult or easy. Work brings me plenty of money, and takes up much time which, had I nothing to do, would be devoted to melancholy and depression of spirits, the natural consequences of my bilious temperament. If, like yourself, I were not fond of writing, I should at least spend a great deal of time in reading. I even regret that my needy circumstances always compel me to rake something out of my brains without ever having the time to acquire fresh knowledge. I long to be able to dispose of a whole year of solitude and complete freedom, in order to hoard up in my head all the foreign masterpieces which I little know or am entirely ignorant of. I expect to derive great pleasure from their study, and I envy those who can do as they please. But, when I have been scribbling my set task, I am only fit to go and sip coffee and smoke cigarettes on the Piazza San Marco, while murdering the Italian language in conversation with my Venetian friends. It is, however, very pleasant—not my broken Italian, but tobacco, friends, and the “Piazza.” I wish I could transport you here by magic and enjoy your surprise.

We little know what architecture is; and our poor Paris is so ugly, so dirty, so incomplete, so mean in that respect!

Yet it is the first place in the world for luxury and material comfort. Industry triumphs over all obstacles and supplies everything; but, if not wealthy, people there undergo all sorts of privations. Here, with one hundred *écus*\* a month, I live better than in Paris with three hundred. Being independent, having neither position, nor family, nor the love of society, nor any obligation for remaining in France, why do not you and your wife come and settle here? Though living quite comfortably, you might save money; you could also bring up your daughter in this country as well as anywhere else. You could have many comforts not to be had in Paris: apartments a hundred times prettier and more roomy; a gondola with a gondolier who could at the same time act as your servant; the whole for sixty francs a month, which in Paris would mean a carriage and pair, a coachman and a valet, that is twelve or fifteen thousand francs a year. Wood and wine sell here at a very low figure; wearing apparel, goods of all kinds, the productions of all countries, cost about half their Paris prices. I pay four francs here for a pair of morocco leather shoes. We went to the café yesterday, there were three of us; we each took three ices, a cup of coffee, and a glass of *punch*, besides as many cakes as we wished, to complete the delights of a full two hours' chat. It cost us in all four Austrian pounds (*livres*). The Austrian *livre* is worth a little less than eighteen French *sous*.

As I intend to spend next winter here again, I shall pilot you if you come. The journey will cost you 1000 francs, for the two; but you will not spend more than 1000 *écus* a-year for everything. That is probably less than you spend in

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\* A coin of the value of three francs; no longer current.

Paris in a year, and into the bargain you will get acquainted with Venice, the finest city in the world. If my son had finished his studies, I should certainly bring my daughter with me and come to pitch my tent here for several years. I should work, as I am in the habit of doing, and, when tired, I should go back to France with a goodish bit of money.

But, as my son is still at college, I cannot refrain from seeing him at least once a year, and all I earn will always be eaten up in travelling to and from Paris.

Good-bye, old friend ; give me news of Maurice and your daughter. Do they enjoy themselves thoroughly whenever they have a holiday ?

My love to Emily, Léontine, and yourself. I have not heard from my mother for a long time. Tell her what you know of me, and request her to write.

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN, Paris.*

VENICE, 6th April, 1834.

MY DEAR BOY,

I have received your two drafts on Papadopoli,\* for which I thank you. I am now certain not to starve, and which to me would be worse, not to be compelled to beg for relief in a foreign country. I shall make terms with Buloz,† and he will satisfy my wants without requiring too much urging, for I contemplate working a good deal.

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\* A banker at Venice.

† Proprietor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

Alfred \* has gone to Paris, and I am going to stay here for some time.

The poor fellow was still very weak to undertake such a long journey. I am not free from anxiety as to the way he will support its fatigue; yet to stay here was doing him more harm than he is likely to meet with by travelling, and every day devoted to awaiting the improvement of his health retarded, instead of accelerating it. He started at last, under the care of a most careful and devoted attendant. The doctor † warranted that no complications were likely to arise from the chest so long as he committed no imprudence and took care of himself; still, I do not feel quite easy about him.

We have parted from each other perhaps for a few months; and perhaps for ever. God alone knows now what will become of my head and heart. I feel strong enough to live, work, and suffer.

The manuscript of *Lélia* is in one of the little Boule chiffoniers. I certainly promised it to Planche, so that, if he cares ever so little about that mass of scribbling, you may give it to him; it is entirely at his disposal. I am quite distressed to learn that he has sore eyes. I wish I could nurse and comfort him. Fill my place beside him and take care of him. If he should question you as to my feelings towards him, tell him that my friendship for him is unaltered. Tell him also, frankly, that I heard of certain expressions which he made use of, after his duel with M. de Feuillide, which led me to suppose that he did not speak of me with all due circumspection.

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\* Alired de Musset.

† Dr. Pagello, a physician at Venice.



He, moreover, published in the *Revue* some pages which rather annoyed me. Our minds are too serious, and he and I are friends too thoroughly faithful to each other, to accept the ridiculous interpretations of the public. I would have given anything in the world to prevent a man, for whom I entertain the greatest esteem, becoming the laughing-stock of a rabble of spiteful artists, whom he often rated soundly, and who, for that very reason, are seeking every opportunity of vexing and lowering him. It struck me that the part of a jilted lover, which those gentlemen wished to ascribe to him, was quite averse to his character and unbecoming the loyalty of our relations. I contrived to my utmost to shield him from so mortifying and ridiculous a part, loudly proclaiming that he never took the trouble of courting me. Our affection was free from any impropriety, and quite fraternal. Wicked comments had obliged me to cease seeing him for a few months, but nothing could have shaken our mutual devotion. Instead of seconding me, Planche compromised both of us: first of all by a duel, which he had no personal reasons for; and then, by complaints and reproaches, very meek it is true, yet quite out of place, and, what is the worst, ten thousand copies of which have been issued.

From such a distance and after so many events, the little incidents of life disappear, just as the details of a landscape but faintly reach the sight of the tourist who contemplates them from the mountain top. The broad outlines are alone discernible in the midst of the vagueness caused by distance. In like manner, the susceptibilities, the little reproaches, the thousand slight grievances of ordinary life, are now vanishing from my memory, which only retains the recollection of serious and true facts: Planche's friendship, his devotion, his inex-

haustible affection for me, those are feelings which will remain indelibly engraved upon my heart!

After leaving Alfred, whom I accompanied as far as Vicenza, I followed the course of the Brenta, and made a little excursion in the Alps. I walked as much as twenty-four miles a day, and found that that kind of exercise was most wholesome for me, physically and morally.

Tell Buloz that I intend writing letters on my pedestrian travelling for his *Revue*.

I returned to Venice with *seven centimes*\* in my pocket ! But for that, I should have pushed as far as the Tyrol; the want of money and clothing, however, compelled me to return - I intend to start again in a few days, and shall resume the crossing of the Alps through the gorges of Piava. I could thus go some distance, spending five francs a day, and covering twenty-five or thirty miles either on foot or on a donkey's back. I contemplate establishing my *head-quarters* in Venice, but making excursions about the country by myself, and in perfect freedom. I am beginning to get quite familiar with the dialect.

When I have seen this province, I shall start for Constantinople and spend a month there, after which I shall go back to Nohant, in order to be there for the holidays. From Nohant I shall take a run up to Paris, and return here.

I am quite grieved at Maurice's silence, though quite delighted to learn at least that he is in good health. His father tells me that he is very studious, and gives every satisfaction to his teachers. As for you, I have requested you at least a dozen

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\* Not quite the equivalent of three farthings.

times to see his marks and acquaint me with them. I must give it up, for you have never made any mention of them, you wretch of a boy! I am very glad that my husband decided upon keeping Solange at Nohant. . . . Had he refused, I would have done my best to go back to Paris, despite the scantiness of my resources for undertaking so long a journey. But, as the case now stands, I may, without causing any prejudice to either of my children, remain here until the Midsummer holidays.

Please never mention to me the articles written for or against me in the newspapers. Here I have at least the satisfaction of remaining quite indifferent to literature, and treating it entirely as a means of earning my bread.

Good-bye, friend; I kiss you with all my heart. Write to me about my son, and send me a letter from him. I must have one by some means. Have you received satisfactory news concerning your mother? You never speak about yourself. Have you got some pupils? Is everything going smooth with you? Are you not in love with some woman, some science, or some crane? \* Do you still think a little of your old friend, who always loves you *paternally*?

G. S.

*To M. HIPPOLYTE CHATIRON, Paris.*

VENICE, 1st June, 1834.

FRIEND,

Now that I am back from Constantinople, I will tell you that it is a very fine place, but that I did not go there. The weather is too warm, and I have not money enough!

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\* An allusion to a crane reared by Boucoiran at Nohant.

If I had any at all, I should go at once to Paris and nowhere else. Should you hear of my being drowned in the Archipelago, rest assured that the story is nothing but a hoax.

I am in Venice, working like a horse in order to pay the expenses of my journey to Italy, which I am still indebted to my publisher for, but am gradually paying off. I expected to clear off my debt a couple of months ago. Some unforeseen circumstances, a journey in the Tyrol, and private troubles delayed my work, and, of course, the profits likely to arise from it.

My courage is not dead; but, for the present, I suffer much at the idea of having been away from my children so long. Boucoiran's silence, which still continues, I know not why, has caused me much anxiety. I at last received from Gustave Papet a letter, containing one from Maurice and one from Laure Decerf, who gives me excellent news of Solange.

I therefore feel easier concerning my little ones; yet I am none the less longing to see them again, and shall be in Paris, at the latest, in time for the distribution of prizes. Maurice's marks are excellent. He has written me the best and most laconic letter in the world: "You inquire whether I am forgetting my old mother. No, I am daily thinking of you. You ask me to write; expect me to do so. You further desire me to know whether I have got over my child's whims; I have."

Such is his style. It sounds like a bulletin of the *Grande Armée*; \* besides which, there is not a mistake in the spelling. I feel very proud of him.

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\* Napoléon's messages to his troops (known throughout his struggle with Germany and Russia as the *Grande Armée*), were famous for their conciseness.

How is Léontine? She must be very tall now, if she has gone on growing as she was when I went away.

Are you still at Corbeil? From what you say I understand that your house is in a fine situation, with plenty of pure air. If you intend going to Nohant next August, we will go there together with Léontine and Emilie, if her health should permit and she should *feel so inclined*.

You seem to me to be rather tired of Nohant; but there is a way of forgetting its unpleasantness: by smoking under the verandah, chatting pleasantly together, and sleeping dog-fashion on the large drawing-room sofa. Even with its white marble stairs and the marvels of its climate, Venice cannot wipe out from my memory the recollection of those things which have been dear to me. Rest assured that the memories of the past are not dead in me. My life is full of excitement. My fate hurls me in various directions, but my heart does not repudiate the past. It suffers or calms itself according to circumstances. Old reminiscences possess a spell from which no one can escape, and I less than anybody. They are, on the contrary, always welcome to me, and it is a sweet prospect to me when I consider that we shall soon again meet together in our old nest at Nohant, where I could not live, but where I hope perhaps to die in peace some day.

To say that one will enjoy a uniform and cloudless life, free from reproaches, amounts to the same thing as the promise of a summer without rain; but when the heart is good, people, on meeting again, remember the affections of the past. It several times occurred to me that I had much to complain of in you; but I definitively made up my mind not to feel cross any more. I knew full well that I should alter my way of thinking in that respect, and could not remain

angry with you, whether you were right or wrong. It is always thus in my life. I return kindnesses, but forget bad treatment; I console myself in times of trouble, and can enjoy pleasant times as they come. Mine is the philosophy of the trooper on active service.

We are, indeed, of the same blood in that respect; but you act thus through indifference; you console yourself without having ever suffered. So much the better for you; your temperament is better than mine.

Farewell, dear brother. Write to me; that will do me much good. I do not give you any particulars respecting my way of living at Venice. You can obtain much information concerning the city itself and the country around it by reading the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of the 15th May last and the 15th of June next, provided you feel any interest in the subject.

I wish my children were here, and that I could prolong my stay in this beautiful country. Kiss Emilie for me, and, should you see my son, let me hear how he is. I kiss you with all my heart.

My address is: *Alla Spezieria Ancillo, Campo San-Luca, Venice.*

*To JULES BOUCOIRAN, Paris.*

VENICE, 4th June, 1834.

MY DEAR BOY,

I am relieved from my anxiety concerning Maurice. I have just received a letter from him, and one from Papet; but I am beginning to feel seriously uneasy about yourself, and quite distressed at your forgetting me. Buloz informs

me that on the 15th May he remitted to you 500 francs for me. I had written to you to send me my money without any delay, as I was quite short. To-day is the 2nd of June, and I have not yet received anything.

I am reduced to the last expedients in order to live, for there is nothing I dislike so much as getting into debt. Maurice writes to say that, a few days ago, he forwarded to you a letter for me. Nothing has reached me! What can it all mean? Has your letter been lost in the post, like a great many more? If Papadopoli had only received a notification from his Paris correspondent! But he, too, is without news. The money cannot, therefore, have been sent. Have you suddenly become so ill as to be unable to fulfil the message entrusted to you?

For the last two months you have displayed towards me the utmost indifference, and despite all the letters wherein I begged of you to let me have some news of my son, have left me in mortal suspense. I suppose that you have fallen in love; and I know well what you are in that respect: when you are in your normal state, you are the most exact of men; but when taken up with some lady's charms, you forget everything and start for the world of fancy. That will only be momentary, I hope. Love passes away, but friendship, after slumbering for a longer or a shorter time, always breaks forth anew. At Nohant, you also displayed those fits of forgetfulness, and I was often frightened at your silence and distressed at remaining, for whole months at a time, without news of my son.

But yet, all that does not justify your leaving me in absolute want in a foreign country. For the last two months I have lived on the 500 francs you sent me.

Run, therefore, to the banker's, I beseech you, and request him to forward to me at once the money placed for me in your hands.

You must have received three months salary of mine (March, April, May) at Salmon's, 900 francs in all; besides 500 francs from Buloz, making 1400 francs altogether. Out of this sum there must remain 1000 francs after paying my rent and deducting the small amounts I owe you, which please to settle before anything else. Bear in mind that I am now living with the strictest economy, and sleeping on a mattress on the floor, for want of a bed. If the delay is caused by your own neglect, you ought to feel some remorse for it; if, on the contrary, it proceeds from a misunderstanding, make haste and put an end to my anxiety. If you can allege any other justifiable reason, let me hear a word about it, it will be gladly welcome; but if, on the other hand, you are tired of attending to my affairs, say so frankly. I shall always be grateful to you for the past, and will not ask anything more from you until your pre-occupations have ceased.

You had satisfactory news to give me respecting the health and progress of my son; how is it that, after waiting a couple of months for them, I receive them from another person? Ha! my boy, you must indeed be very upset in heart or mind!

Farewell, friend; above all take care of your health. I do not mind anything so long as you are well.

Never mention politics in your letters. Firstly, I care very little about them, and secondly, that would be a sure reason for your letters not reaching me.

G. S.



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*To M. FRANCOIS ROLLINAT, Châteauroux.*

PARIS, 15th August, 1834.

FRIEND,

Yesterday, on returning from Venice, where I have spent the whole year, I found your kind letter of April last. I shall start in five or six days for Berry, and hope to meet you at Châteauroux. Try to be there between the 24th and the 26th, and to come with me to Nohant. That is absolutely necessary in order to complete my happiness.

I have nothing to tell you about myself; except that I was distressed at being away from my children, and am now delighted at again seeing Maurice, and impatient as regards Solange, that I love you like a brother, and that, under the lovely stars of the Italian sky, I never spent an evening without recollecting our walks and conversations at Nohant.

I did not write to you while away; for I must have given you an account of my whole life—a sad and wearisome pilgrimage—to describe which I had no heart. I will tell you all when we meet once more in my garden or in the dales of Urmont.

Whatever your previous business engagements may be, do not, friend, deprive me of that pleasure. Consider that business opportunities may again offer themselves, whereas, happy days do not come in showers for us.

Good-bye, friend. I have walked three hundred and fifty leagues,\* for I went all through Switzerland; besides which my nose is so sunburnt that I look altogether *lovely*. Thank

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\* The French league is equivalent to three English miles.

goodness we are friends! for I defy any animal belonging to our species not to fall back horror-stricken at the sight of me. Still I don't care, for my heart is overflowing with joy.

*To M. JULES BOUCOIRAN, Paris.*

NOHANT, 31st August, 1834.

MY DEAR BOY,

I reached home very tired and rather unwell; I am better now. Maurice is well. All my friends—Gustave Papet, Alphonse Fleury, Charles Duvernet, and Duteil—came to dine with us and the ladies of the Decerf family and Jules Néraud on the day after my return.

I experienced great pleasure in being here once again in their midst. I felt I had come to take leave of my birth-place, of all the recollections of my youth and childhood; for you must have understood and guessed that life is henceforth hateful and impossible for me, and that I have earnestly made up my mind to finish it before long.

We will talk of that again some other time.

Meanwhile, I wish to thank you for the constant and untiring friendship of which you have given me so many proofs. I should have been happy if I had always met with such hearts as yours. You are even now taking every care of my friend Pagello.

I am truly grateful for it. Pagello is a worthy and honest man like yourself, quite of the same stamp, kind and self-devoted. I am indebted to him for my own life

and Alfred's.\* He contemplates staying a few months in Paris. I entrust and *bequeath* him to you; as, with the present seriously diseased state of my mind, I know not what may happen to me.

It is quite possible that I shall not return to Paris, at least for the present. That is why, as I fear that I might never again see that dear Pagello, who will probably soon go back to his own country, I invite him (with M. Dudevant's consent) to come and spend a week or ten days here with us. I do not know whether he will accept my invitation. Join your entreaties to mine so that he may do me that favour, not by reading my letter to him, its depressed tone might grieve him, but by telling him that his visit will afford me the opportunity of expressing to him an affection unfortunately sterile and on the point of entering the grave.

I am anxious to have a long talk with you and to entrust you with the execution of my last and sacred wishes. Do not scold me beforehand. When we have talked together for an hour, when I have acquainted you with the state of my brain and heart, you will agree with me that it would be undignified and cowardly to try to live, when I already ought to have finished with life. The time has not yet come for explaining myself on that subject. It will, however, come soon.

Should Pagello decide to come, give him all necessary information concerning the journey, and send him off next Friday. If you could accompany him, your presence would

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\* Alfred de Musset, with whom George Sand had been travelling through Italy.

cause me great pleasure; that is why I do not expect you. Tell him what he will have to do at Châteauroux, where he will arrive at four o'clock in the morning, to start off again at six, by the La Châtre coach; for, at Luard's\* they are not very affable to passing travellers.

Good-bye. I am all in a fever. Solange is charming. I cannot help crying when I kiss her.

Give orders to have my mattresses corded. I do not wish to be eaten alive by worms.

Adieu, friend. Your old mother is very ill. Tell my landlord that I intend to keep my apartments.

What is the use of removing for so short a time as that which I contemplate still spending in this world?

*To M. FRANCOIS ROLLINAT, Châteauroux.*

NOHANT, 20th September, 1834.

I intended writing you a long letter immediately after your departure; but I failed to hit upon any argument in favour of my ideas. They only relate to a sentiment, to a kind of quite exceptional heroic instinct, and about which I should not dare to speak in earnest with more than three persons of my acquaintance.

I never felt towards you either moral or physical love; but since the first day I knew you, I have experienced for you one of those rare, profound, and insuperable sympathies which nothing can alter; for the deeper one examines oneself, the more identical with the being who inspires and shares that

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\* An innkeeper at Châteauroux, at whose place the coach used to put up.

sympathy does one discover oneself to be. Your nature did not appear to me superior to mine ; otherwise, I should have felt towards you the enthusiasm which leads to love. But I felt that you were my equal, my fellow, *mio compare*, as they say in Venice.

You were better than I because you were younger, you had not lived so long in the turmoil, and had, from the outset, been placed by God on a firmer and better-defined path. Yet on leaving His hands your virtues and your faults, your lofty and your lowly sides, were similar to mine.

I know many men far superior to you ; but I shall never love them as I do you, from the bottom of my heart. Never would it happen that I could walk about with them a whole night under the starry heavens, without my mind or heart experiencing some moments of antipathy and dissidence. Yet, how often have we prolonged till daybreak those long walks and never-ending talks, when, whatever impulse was awakened in my soul was at the same time echoed in your own, and when the confession of such miseries could never have risen to my lips !

We profess towards each other similar profound indulgence, and a weak and tender *complaisance*, akin to that which one usually displays towards oneself. The same sort of fatuity which one feels as regards one's own ideas, the same kind of proud confidence which one places in one's own strength and worth, we display towards each other. Not once even did we discuss anything, good or bad. The utterances of the one are readily adopted by the other, not out of *complaisance* or devotion, but out of necessary sympathy.

Before being acquainted with you, I never believed that such reciprocal adoption of views could be possible, and,

although possessing faithful, numerous, and valuable friends, I never met one (unless a child having never yet felt or thought by himself) whose affection I did not have to conquer and to preserve which some care, labour, and personal exertion were not required on my part.

It is fortunate that mankind should be thus made, and all those discrepancies of character of infinitely varied shades exist, so that men may smooth the asperities of their temper through mutual intercourse, and adopt rules of conduct enabling them to avoid clashing together.

But, when two identical beings meet face to face, when, after one day of *tête-à-tête*, they perceive with surprise and delight that they can thus spend all the days of their lives without ever crossing or grieving one another, what thanks ought they not to render to God! He, indeed, granted them an exceptional favour; in the person of the *friend*, He bestowed upon them an invaluable gift, for which most men are seeking in vain.

*To M. CHARLES DUVERNET, La Châtre.*

PARIS, 15th October, 1834.

MY DEAR COMRADE,

I think you are unjust and foolish to doubt my friendship. But you promise to rely blindly and for ever upon my reply, and that lessens your fault.

Yes, my friend, I love you sincerely and with all my heart. I feel indifferent as to whether your temper is good or bad, amiable or sulky. I accept people's tempers as they are because I scarcely believe that man has the power of

modifying his temperament, of causing the nervous to overrule the sanguine, or the bilious to dictate to the lymphatic. I am of opinion that our way of behaving through the ordinary course of daily life proceeds essentially from our physical organisation ; I should never, therefore, blame anybody for being similar or different from me. What I care for, are innermost thoughts, serious sentiments, that which people call heart ; when I find a man deficient in that, although that too may not be his fault, I keep away from him, because, after all, I myself possess a heart ! Having nothing to do with natural dispositions in my life of independence and social isolation, I only consider heart and conscience. I have always known your heart to be good and sincere ; I sometimes suspected it of being less warm than it really is, a mistake into which I fell respecting all my friends.

That occurred after heavy troubles which had morally brought me to a morbid state. You must forgive me ; for I never told you my suspicions, although I felt cruelly grieved. In the state of mind I was then in I could not accept as reasonable any arguments but my own. I should therefore have been very foolish to complain.

You must not reproach me with having kept silent ; but, above all, do not think that I am still in the same disposition.

I am cured : not that I feel happier, but because, having grown accustomed and resigned to my troubles, my judgment is no longer misled by my feelings of grief.

I went to you, full of regret and sadness at my inward doubts, and your welcome was so hearty, the affection you displayed was so true, that I felt quite cured on pressing your hand. How pregnant with explanations, justifications, and protestations is a cordial shake of the hand ! It is said that

one friendly shake of the hand is worth more than a thousand love kisses. How could you suppose that those I gave you on meeting again and on taking leave from you were not sincere?

We are the two oldest comrades among the members of the society we frequent, and I am aware that on all occasions you have taken up my defence against the injustice of others. I know that you never doubted me when the world calumniated me, and that you forgave me when I committed the jokes which the world calls faults. What more could I expect? You are witty into the bargain, and your company is pleasant and recreative; that, my boy, is true luxury. Your wife is lovely and exceedingly kind, and treated me at once like an old friend. The best proof of your affection for me is Eugénie's\* conduct towards me. I was unable to express the good all that did me, but I thought that the fact of my coming back from Valençay would be understood by you as conveying my appreciation of your kindness. Never in the midst of the most serious and deepest causes of grief, had my heart been so sweetly moved, softened, and comforted.

You sometimes misconstrued my laughter and my countenance, though both were only the result of the inward struggle taking place between my secret grief and the delight you were causing me. At all events, you still remain my friends, and were I to lose everything else, your friendship would still be for me a real and priceless treasure. Have no fear that I should ever underrate it, its value has been too obvious to me during the last few days. You both, dear friends, will be my refuge, and, should I ever again feel tired of life, I would still ask you to bind me to it.

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\* Madame Charles Duvernct.



But the first condition of my happiness is to be assured of your own. You are happy, are you not? Do not say no; that would distress me too much. Yours is, I know, a meditative and melancholy nature; but that is no reason why you should be haughty and ungrateful. True and real joys have taken in your life the place of the void and wearisomeness of which you used to complain in the past; your wife is delightful, and your child lovely. While you were both ill at Valençay, I saw you kissing each other. You love each other; instead of blaming you for that, society considers it as an honour and a virtue.

Believe me, your fate is the finest possible. Were either of you to fancy or wish for something better, that one must be very ungrateful. I agree with you that you ought to have some permanent occupation: nobody should be idle. You have decided upon looking me up, and I fully approve your decision. It is a mistake to think oneself good for nothing. As for me, I believe everybody good for something; you could write novels, and I could be *receveur particulier*.\* The important point is the will. If you should earnestly make up your mind to do something, and should need my help, my heart, arms, and purse I shall gladly place at your disposal. If you should come here to study the law, bring your wife with you, I shall be a mother and a sister to her.

Meanwhile I send her a nice fashionable dress with cuffs. Please ask her to forward the hat to the petite "Gauloise."† As for your music and Alphonse's pipe, I will send them later on. I am just now entirely penniless, and must be so for another

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\* *Receveur particulier*—District Receiver of Inland Revenue.

† Nickname of Madame Alphonse Fleury.

week, a situation I often am in, without however having to submit to any privation, thanks to the admirable management which is one of my characteristic features. I will not keep Eugénie waiting for the dress; as for the rest, I must put off sending it until an occasion offers. Tell me what are the *contredanses* which your wife asks for. I really must confess that I do not remember. The cuffs are not such as she wanted, people only wear the kind I send her.

When shall I see you again, dear friends? Certainly as early as I can. In the meantime, love me well. You are all of you so kind and living so close to one another. The "Gaulois," \* his wife, Papet, Duteil, what kind hearts and sympathetic friends! You live in the midst of them all, ignoring even the names of the griefs that devour me.

God be praised for that! For you deserve better; but I ask from you as a favour to make room for me at the banquet, whenever I come to sit at your table.

Good-bye; I kiss every one of you with all my heart.

*To M. ADOLPHE GUÉROULT, Paris.*

PARIS, 6th May, 1835.

MY DEAR BOY,

Your letter is kind and beautiful like your soul; but I send back the enclosed page, which is absurd and highly improper. Nobody must write to me in that tone. If you feel inclined to discourse and discuss so puerile an accessory

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\* Nickname of M. Alphonse Fleury.

as my garments,\* do so, pray, with different ideas and employ other expressions. It is better that you should not concern yourself about my costume. Peruse the parts which I have underlined. They are highly impertinent. I should think you must have had a drop too much when you wrote them. I bear you no ill-will for that, and do not love you any the less. I merely warn you against again committing any such ridiculous mistake; it is unbecoming in you. I have always seen you display exquisite tact and a delicacy of feeling which I appreciated.

As for the rest of your letter, you are quite right, and I do not intend to continue a controversy as regards the *Saint-Simonians*! I love those men and admire their first leap in this world. I fear that they will modify their views in accordance with our coarse and covetous reason, not out of corruption, but out of lassitude or misguidance.

You know that I judge all things sympathetically. I little sympathise with our civilisation, though it is triumphing in the East. I should prefer another, not having Louis Philippe as its patron and Janin † as its *coryphée*.

In that I am perhaps unjust. You must not, therefore, pay any attention to it, and above all never alarm yourself at the fits of spleen or bilious irritation you may sometimes notice in me.

You are mistaken if you think me more *fretful* now than in the past. On the contrary, I am less so. Great men and great thoughts are constantly before my eyes. I should be

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\* Adolphe Guérault had rebuked George Sand for going about in men's clothes.

† Jules Janin.

ungracious if I were to deny the existence of labour ~~and~~ virtue.

My ideas respecting the rest are the result of my ~~cha~~-  
 racter. My sex, with which in more than one respect I  
 get on very well, allows of my not exerting myself too much  
 towards amendment. Were I the greatest genius in the  
 world, I would not disturb a straw in the universe, and with  
 the exception of a few whiffs of virile and warlike ardour,  
 I easily fall back into a wholly sentimental and poetical  
 existence, quite without doctrines and systems.

Were I a man, I would willingly from time to time take  
 up the sword or the pen; but as I am not, I will leave the  
 sword alone and take up the pen, which I will endeavour to  
 use as well as I possibly can. / It matters little what sort  
 of garments I wear in my study, and my friends will, I hope,  
 have as much respect for me if I don a vest as though I wore  
 a shift.

I never go out-of-doors dressed in men's clothes without  
 taking a stick with me; therefore, do not feel uneasy. The  
 fancy I have for wearing a *frock-coat* sometimes, and in  
 given circumstances, will not bring about a great revolution in  
 my life. /

Calm yourself, I do not covet the dignity of man. It  
 seems to me too ludicrous to deserve to be preferred to  
 woman's servility. But I intend to possess, now and ever,  
 the full and proud independence which you men believe you  
 have alone the right to enjoy. I would not advise everybody  
 to follow my example; but I will not, as regards myself,  
 allow any love of mine. to offer the least obstacle to it. I  
 trust that I shall be able to lay down such harsh and precise  
 conditions that no man will be rash or vile enough to accept  
 them.

Those considerations are, you feel it yourself, matters quite personal to me, which may raise doubts or blame in your mind, without my taking offence; but do they involve serious discussion? No, indeed, there is no more arguing about it than about hunger, which gets satisfied or makes itself felt. But we shall see! It is useless to speak of the morrow when one is contented with the schemes of the day. If we did not believe in the duration of a scheme, it could not exist for one single minute in our brain. But if we could ensure that duration, we should be as mighty as God Himself.

Therefore consider me as a man or as a woman, as you please. Duteil says I am neither one nor the other, but that I am a *being*. That implies all the bad and all the good *ad libitum*.

Be that as it may, look upon me as a friend, as being at the same time a brother and a sister to you: a brother, in order to render you the services which you might expect from a man; a sister, so as to listen to and understand the delicate feelings of your heart.

But tell your friends and acquaintances that it is quite useless for them to desire to kiss me for the sake of my dark eyes, because I do not kiss more readily when wearing a frock-coat than when wearing the garb of my sex!)

Good-bye; do not let us *talk* any more on that subject, it would be both irksome and improper. Let us speak of the world's prospects and of the beauties of Saint-Simonism as much as you like. I should be very sorry to alter your temper, and I warn you that it would not be easy to modify mine.

Yours at heart,

GEORGE.

*To M. ALEXIS DUTEIL, La Châtre.*

PARIS, 25th May, 1835.

OLD FELLOW,

I perceive that, after all, Casimir\* is really down-hearted, that he much regrets his little kingdom, and that the idea of seeing me introduce the least modification into *his arrangements* is bitter and mortifying to him, although he does not say so.

I also perceive that the separation of our home and resources will not take place without provoking grief and ill-humour on his part, and that, in consenting to it, he thinks he performs a truly stoical deed. I am not inclined to consider his repugnance as serious. My profession affords me independence and liberty of action, and it is not to my taste to accept grace or favour from anybody, even when people do me a charity with my own money. I should not feel pleased if my husband (who, so it seems, is impelled by some influence hostile to me) were to take it into his head to give himself out as a victim, chiefly in my children's eyes, whose esteem I much value. I am anxious that people should know to my credit that I never did anything good or bad, unless he authorised or tolerated it. Do not meet this by considerations of *sentiment* on his part. I never judge sentiments except through actions, and all I wish is that he should remain with me on a footing of friendship, likely to serve as a salutary example to my children. I do not want to ensure my welfare at the expense of the self-love or of

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\* Casimir Dudevant, George Sand's husband.

the pleasures of any one. *That is my character, nature, as Odry \* would say.*

I therefore return to you the agreements which he signed, and, moreover, I return them torn up, so that he may only have the trouble of burning them should he in the least regret the arrangement proposed and drawn up by himself. Good-bye, old fellow! I will come and see you during holiday time. I shall stay at M. Dudevant's, provided he condescends to grant me his hospitality. If not, I shall hire a room at Brazier's; † for nothing in the world could induce me to give up any of my friends. But, as regards a stipulated separation, proclaimed with trumpets and wetted with the tears of my husband's friends, I will not have it, and *would rather never come back from Constantinople ‡* than see the Mayor of Nohant-Vic § grow thin over it.

Long live joy, old boy! I am, and shall always be, your best friend.

GEORGE.

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\* An actor.

† Brazier, an innkeeper at La Châtre.

‡ Allusion to a contemplated journey which she never performed.

§ Baron Casimir Dudevant, her husband, was the chief magistrate of his town.

*To THE COUNTESS D'AGOULT,\* Geneva.*

PARIS, May, 1835.

MY BEAUTIFUL, FAIR-HAIRED COUNTESS,

I am not personally acquainted with you, but I have heard Franz † talk about you, and have seen you myself. I believe that, after that, I may without folly tell you that I love you, that you seem to me the only beautiful, estimable, and truly noble star which I have seen shining in the patrician sphere. You must indeed be very attractive, since I forgot your being a countess.

But now you are to my eyes the real type of the fantastic princess, artistic, loving, and noble in her ways, language, and dress, like the daughters of kings in poetic times. Thus you appear to me, and I wish to love you as you are and for what you are.

Of noble birth, let it be so, since being noble in name (as far as words go) you succeeded in being noble in ideas, and since, though a countess, you appeared to me amiable and beautiful, as sweet as the Valentine of whom I dreamed in the past, and far more intelligent; for you are so, and rather too much so, and that is the only thing I can find to reproach you with. I address the same reproach to Franz, to all those whom I love. Numerous and active ideas constitute a great evil. A whole life should only possess a few of them; then the secret of happiness would be found.

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\* The Countess d'Agoult who, under the pseudonym of *Daniel Stern*, wrote among other works: *La Révolution de 1848*, *Histoire des Pays-Bas*, and *Esquisses Morales*.

† Franz Liszt.



I cherish the hope of coming to see you as one of the **pleasante**st projects I ever formed in my life. I fancy that **when** we know more of each other we shall both really love **each** other. You are a thousand times better than I; but **you** will see that I do not lack the sentiment of all that **is** fine, of all that which you possess. It is not my fault **if** I am not better. I was of a good seed, but instead of being **sown** in a good soil I was dropped among stones, and the **winds** scattered me. Never mind! I am not envious of other **people's** happiness. Far from it. It makes up for my want of it. It reconciles me to Providence, and proves that when **it** ill-treats its children it only does so unwittingly. I still **understand** the languages which I no longer speak, and **although** I might often keep silent beside you, none of your **words** would fall upon an indifferent ear or into a barren **hear**

You wish to write? Do so by all means! You will not **find** it difficult to surpass the glory of Miltiades whenever **inclined** to do so. You are young, in the full possession of **your** intellect, in all the lucidity of your unbiassed judgment. **Make** haste and write, before having thought much; when **you** have pondered over all things, you will feel no special **taste** for any particular subject, and will write by habit only. **Write** while you have genius, while the gods and not memory **dictate** to you. I predict great success for you. May God spare **you** the thorns which protect the sacred flowers composing the **crown** of fame! For why should they stand in your way? **You** are diamond-like, you whose heart is as free from **vindictive** and hateful passions as is mine; besides, you **never** passed through the wilderness. You are brilliant, fresh, and blooming.

Show what you can do. Should it be necessary to write newspaper articles in order to induce the public to read your first book, I will fill the press with them. But, once read, you will no longer require anybody's assistance.

Farewell; talk of me by your fireside. I think of you daily, and am delighted to know you are understood and beloved as you deserve to be. Write to me when you have time to do so. It will cast a beam of happiness and sunshine on my loneliness. If sad, that will revive me; if happy, it will increase my happiness; if calm, as is now my usual frame of mind, it will cause me to consider life in a still more religious aspect.

All that God has given man is good for him, according to circumstances, when he knows how to accept it. His soul gets transformed under the hand of a great artist able to turn it to the best advantage, provided the clay does not resist the hands of the modeller.

Good-bye, dear Marie. *Ave, Maria, gratia plena!*

GEORGE.

*To MADAME CLAIRE BRUNNE,\* Paris.*

PARIS, May, 1835.

MADAM,

Please to accept the full expression of my gratitude for the good will with which you honour me.

Rest assured that *the unknown well-wishers I possess in this world*, and to which you belong, are in close communion with me in the eyes of God.

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\* Widow of Mr. Marbouty, and a distinguished writer.

**B**ut to you, who appear to be a superior woman, I can say what I should not dare to say to others: Do not try to see me! Praises disturb and distress me painfully. I feel that I do not deserve them. I should appear cold to you, and should no doubt displease you, as I did before many persons who caused me to feel timid, in spite of my efforts to express my gratitude to them. The prying gaze, full of exigence and curiosity, which the world accords me, is the chastisement of my vain and irksome fame. Allow me to shun it.

Were I to meet you in a field, at an inn, were I to see you at your country house or at mine, I might hope to surmount the difficulty of a first interview, and should have full confidence in myself. But here we should never be alone together; my attic is only composed of one room, and thirty visitors call upon me every day, either as friends, or on business, or simply out of idle curiosity. I often give way to them, lest they should think me proud. Understand me and love me better than they all. You do not want me, otherwise I should go and meet you.

Do not think me ungrateful. I kiss the hand which wrote my eulogy with so much grace.

GEORGE SAND.

*To MR. \* \* \**

PARIS, June, 1835.

Love, such as it is conceived and felt by our nature in 1835, is not the purest and noblest feeling in the world. It has been worse and better, according to circumstances.

In our days it is a mixture of enthusiasm and selfishness

which, among women, imparts to it quite a special character. Deprived of the *salutary* prejudices of devotion, abandoned to the fermentation of reason which runs helter-skelter through their education, they are nevertheless rigorously branded by public opinion. The latter is, on one side, the intolerance of ill-looking, cold, or cowardly women; on the other, the sneering and insulting censure of men, who no longer wish for devout women, who do not yet want them to be enlightened, but always require them to be faithful. It is not easy for women to combine philosophy and chastity. Such instances are scarcely met with, unless there be no warmth of temperament, and yet that in itself is not a guarantee. Vanity leads to more follies and blunders than does temperament.

Women, in our days, are therefore neither enlightened, nor devout, nor chaste. The moral revolution which was to transform them according to the wishes of the new male generation failed to produce the desired effect. Men refused to allow woman to raise herself in her own eyes, they declined to give her a noble part to play, and to place her on a footing of equality which would have fitted her for virile virtues. For free women chastity would have been an honour. For enthralled women it is a tyranny which wounds their feelings, and whose yoke they resolutely shake off. I cannot blame them.

I, however, have no esteem for them. They lost their cause by rushing into dissipation in the name of love and enthusiasm, and the conduct of each and all such women, whatever it may be, is always full of folly and imprudence, mixed up with the most opposite feelings: weakness and fear. From all their folly there has never resulted hitherto anything good, durable, and noble after their fall. They

never succeed in leading an honourable and worthy existence. We see one ostensibly breaking off all intercourse with society, and soon after resorting to a thousand mean devices in order to re-enter it; another, having ruined her lover, is a beggar, and, having been accustomed to wear satin dresses, thinks herself very unfortunate to be reduced to don rags. Another, again, in order to escape misery, becomes depraved, and turns out worse than a "common woman." Finally, another, and she probably the best of all, seeing what misfortune she has brought upon her paramour, and not knowing how to remedy the situation, puts an end to her life, with the result only of turning her survivor into an object of horror unless he soon follow her example.

Such is what, up to the present, I have noticed in the romantic adventures of our times. Any such calm, respectable and enviable union I have not met with, and doubt whether any such is to be found in France. Our society is still full of hostility against those who run foul of its institutions and prejudices, and females who feel the want of liberty, and are not yet ripe for it, lack both the strength and the power for carrying on the struggle against a whole society which has doomed them, to say the least, to abandonment and misery.

That is the social picture which I would have you place under the eyes of your young friend. You must show her in all its ugly reality, the condition of woman in these days of transition, which pave the way to a better fate for those who will come after us. As for her, still pure and spotless as a flower, you must point out to her the beautiful part she has to play, but warn her against impulsive actions. That beautiful part I will presently explain to you.

A man free to dispose of himself, and wealthy to a certain degree, might elope with his mistress and become her protector. And yet existence under such circumstances could only be tolerable provided the mistress had much strength of mind, and her protector were perfect. The latter must be capable of filling a whole life by himself.

You are certainly one of the best men I know, and your young mistress is possibly gifted with great powers of resignation for bearing the troubles of life, although until now she has scarcely given any proof of it. But you are poor, you are bound to a sacred duty, and unless you fulfil it you will only be an average and dry-hearted man. The woman who could induce you to desert that duty, and could still love you afterwards, would only be a being excited by gross desires. Having satisfied the latter, you might never see any more of her; a true and honest love will never thrive upon cowardly and shameful sacrifices.

What then can you do for each other? Nothing at all as regards deeds. Putting aside the husband's friendship, which involves extra duties on your part, you have no right to modify the social position of any woman whatever. You must not even marry, unless you meet with a dowry.

Being unable to belong freely to each other, methinks you both ought to regard with loathing the unclean and cowardly intercourse which reserves for the husband the responsibilities of paternity. I do not believe you capable of loving for a week a woman who, in order to avoid sure misfortune, would lend to marital embrace a bosom fecundated by you.

Do your best to be wise, and do not allow prolonged

tête-à-tête and hours of enthusiasm to degenerate, under the veil of ecstasy, into physical desires, against which, when you have indiscreetly trifled with them, resistance is no longer possible.

Purify your hearts, be martyrs and saints, or leave each other without delay; for, if weak enough to succumb, you will both be plunged into a series of misfortunes and disappointments, in the midst of which love will vanish. I feel sure of that as far as you are concerned, for your soul, I know, could not become sullied without at once detesting the defiling cause.

The strict virtue which I counsel will, I suppose, be only hard to practise for you as a man. I should really be surprised if a woman in the flower of youth, and still quite pure, should fail to grasp the poetry and charm of such virtue, and, after a very short time, should not find in it all the guarantees for her happiness and security.

It is easy to conceive under a general aspect the noble part she will play and the worthy example she will offer in thus acting. Women situated similarly in the terrible struggle between a passion and their duty will mightily plead their cause in displaying the strength of mind of which they are capable. Being compelled to esteem them, their husbands will never oppress them. If they should do so, if we should really see a faultless, generous, prudent, and stoical sex, insulted and misunderstood by a despotic and brutal one, that would soon give rise to enfranchising laws; for each sex possesses for the cause of truth, a sentiment of justice and a craving for equity which can be roused and will prevail in due time.

I feel no doubt that, if all this be properly settled and

duly regarded, your love will be happy, durable, and worthy of admiration. Your chief characteristics are constancy, equanimity, and tenderness. A woman worthy of you will durably enlist your affection, and it is impossible that a woman who has understood you should not be your equal as regards courage and delicacy of feeling.

Society is bad and cruel. Our passions are neither good nor bad. The difficulty is to make something out of nothing. It is easy enough to love. The commonest of *grisettes* will write fine love-letters, and sacrifice herself with as much abnegation as a muse. It requires much labour and a superior will to turn passion into a virtue. If we would raise the level of society, we must likewise raise the standard of our passions. But by following their impulse we shall do a very usual and common thing, only fit to provide MM. Scribe, Balzac, George Sand, and Company with the subject of a vaudeville or of a novel. Such people should not be taken as umpires in regard to wisdom and truth. They write stories in order to amuse us. Were their object to deliver lectures on morality they would depict life such as it is.

*To MAURICE DUDEVANT, Collège Henri IV., Paris.*

PARIS, 18th June, 1835.

Study, be strong, proud, independent, and scorn the little vexations inseparable from your age. Reserve your power of resistance for acts and facts worthy of it. Time will come when resistance will be commendable. Should I be no more, think then of me, who suffered and worked cheerfully. We are alike in body and soul. I know, even now, what sort of



intellectual life yours will be. I fear much profound grief is in store for you, but I hope that you will have many pure joys. Keep up within yourself the treasure called kindness. Give without hesitation, lose without regret, acquire without meanness. Should happiness desert you, let that of those whom you love fill your heart, and share in it as though it were your own. Do not give up your hopes in a future life, wherein mothers and sons will meet again. Love all God's creatures; forgive those who are disinherited by nature; resist those who are iniquitous; devote yourself to those who are great in virtue.

Love me! I will teach you many things if we ever live together. Should we not be destined to enjoy that happiness (the greatest which could happen to me, the only cause of my wishing for a long life), you will pray to God for me, and from the bosom of death, should anything be left of me in the whole universe, the shadow of your mother will watch over you.

Your friend,

GEORGE.

*To Madame MAURICE DUPIN, Paris.*

NOHANT, 25th October, 1835.

MY DEAR MAMMA,

It is my duty to acquaint you, first of all, with facts which must not come to your knowledge by the channel of public report. I have brought an action for judicial separation against my husband. My reasons for so doing are so very serious that I will not here expound them to you. I shall shortly go to Paris, and will then take you as judge of

my conduct. For my interest, for my children's, and for his own, I think I have done right. Dudevant feels his case is a bad one, for he does not even try to defend it, and will go back to Paris in a few days, there to await the decision of the Court.

Should you see him, do not pretend to be acquainted with what is going on, for his vanity, already much hurt, might be further incensed were he to suspect that I indulge in recriminations against him. He might then raise some quibble likely to bring about a scandal, and not calculated to improve his position. Besides, you cannot desire me to lose a suit, after which I should be at his mercy. The chances are a thousand to one that I shall carry the day, but a single thing might be sufficient to throw me.

Therefore, be cautious ; for he will probably call upon you with the intention of disculpating himself, or in order to sound you. You must, dear mamma, assume perfect ignorance. As for me, without meaning to accuse him uselessly, I should think I was not fulfilling my duty were I to fail to inform you of my situation in such serious circumstances.

The following will be the results of the decision which I hope to obtain from the Court, all the clauses of which my husband himself laid down or agreed to : I engage to pay him a yearly income of three thousand eight hundred francs, which, added to twelve hundred francs (all that is left out of a fortune of one hundred thousand francs which he once possessed), will make up an income of five thousand francs a year. I shall besides undertake alone the charge for the education of my two children. You see that his position will be quite honourable, and that he need not grumble.

My daughter will be left entirely to my own care ; my son

will stay at college and spend one month of his holidays with his father, the other month with me. They are both ignorant of the separation decided upon; that is a matter easy to keep from them, unnecessary and even grievous to tell them, and, if my husband will respect propriety and duty, neither of my children will learn to love one of their parents at the expense of the other.

In consideration of these provisions, Dudevant will let the law have its course without wrangling, and, should it decide in my favour, as doubtless it will, I shall recover my freedom and dignity. My property will certainly be taken better care of than by him, and my life be subjected no longer to violence which knew no limit.

Nothing will prevent me from doing that which I must and mean to do. I am my father's daughter, and do not care a jot for prejudice when my heart dictates to me courage and justice. Had my father listened to the fools of this world I should not be heiress to his name; in that he left a grand example of independence and paternal love which I will follow, even should I, in so doing, scandalise the whole universe. The latter is indifferent to me; all I care for are Maurice and Solange.

When you feel inclined to come to Nohant, you will in future find yourself there in my own house, and, if you should grow tired of living all alone, you will be welcome at Nohant, which you must then regard as your own.

I contemplate settling down there with my daughter, whose education I will undertake, and go to Paris only from time to time, in order to see you and my son.

Please not to speak to anybody about the contents of this letter, unless it be to Pierret, who will understand the

prudence dictated in this case. I will not write to my aunt yet on the subject; her family is so numerous that something of it might leak out, and Dudevant might thus think that I intend to estrange my whole family from him.

Good-bye, mother; I kiss you with all my heart. Let me hear from you at *poste restante* La Châtre.

*To THE COUNTESS D'AGOULT, Geneva.*

NOHANT, 1st November, 1835.

Messrs. Franz and Puzzi\* are horrid young men—they have not replied to my letter, and I abandon them to your wrath. As for you, you are an angel, and I thank you; but refrain from kindness towards them, and avenge me for their forgetfulness by refusing a smile to the one and a sweet to the other for a whole day.

Is Geneva habitable in the winter, that you stay there? What a lovely and enviable life you lead! But why did not Heaven create me with a beautifully fair head of hair, large calm blue eyes, a truly celestial expression, and a soul in keeping with it?

Instead of that, the bile devours me, and confines me to a regular cell, wherein I have no other society but a skull† and a Turkish pipe. I am attached to the place as a Laplander to the frozen land which he calls his country, and I could not for the present fancy any other Eden. As for you, fair and kind

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\* Franz Liszt and Hermann Cohen, his pupil.

† Allusion to an anatomical piece bearing divisions, legends, and numbers written with ink, according to the phrenological system of Gall and Spurzheim.

Marie, you are in myrtle and orange groves. Pray for me, that I may not leave my icy solitude, for I am in my element, and the sun does not shine upon me.

I am not jealous of you, but I admire and esteem you ; for I am aware that durable love is a diamond requiring a case of pure gold, and your soul is that precious tabernacle.

All you say respecting the non-superiority of the various social classes over one another is well said and well thought. It is true, and I believe it because you say it. Yet I will not allow any one else to tell me that the last are not the first, and that the oppressed is not better than the oppressor, the despoiled than the spoliator, the slave than the tyrant. That is an old hatred of mine against all that is raised upon pedestals of clay. But this is a question which I cannot discuss with you. Your rank is high, I bow to it and acknowledge it. It consists in being kind, intelligent, and beautiful. Put aside your coronet of countess, and let me break it in pieces. I will give you a starry crown far more becoming to you.

Excuse my being metaphorical to-day, and I beseech you, for God's sake, do not laugh at me. You know I am not usually given to emphasis, and if I now assume that pedantic tone, it is that my poor head is aching with the mist which we call poetry. Besides, reasonable ways are all very well towards those hostile crowds which we term the indifferent ; but with those we love we may be as ridiculous as we please. That is why I will no more refrain from saying to you things in bad taste than from sending a besmudged letter.

Just fancy, my dear friend, that timidity is my greatest plague. You would scarcely have suspected it ? Everybody believes me to be of bold mind and temper. Everybody is

mistaken. My mind is indifferent and my temper acrimonious. I am not afraid of, but I mistrust people, and my life is one of dreadful anguish when I am not alone, or in the society of those with whom I feel as free as with my dogs. You must not hope to cure me easily of certain fits of stiffness which are only expressed by reticence. ) If we should become better acquainted, as I hope and wish that we may, you will have to exercise your control over me, otherwise I shall always be unpleasant. If you treat me like a child I shall become good, because I shall feel at ease ; I shall not be afraid lest any importance should be attached to me ; I shall feel at liberty to say the most stupid, foolish, and improper things in the world without being ashamed. I shall know that you have *accepted* me as I am. If I have bad moments I shall also have good ones. Otherwise I should be neither good nor bad. I shall weary you, and so will you me, however perfect you may be.

Mankind is my enemy, let me tell you ; I love my friends tenderly and blindly. All others I have profoundly detested. I feel no ardour now for hatred ; but I am cold as death to those whom I do not know. I much fear that that is what people call the selfishness of old age. I would sacrifice my life for the defence of ideas which will, no doubt, never be realised in my lifetime. I would help the meanest clown out of obstinacy for the hope of all my life, which is perhaps nothing else than a long dream. To please myself I would not save my neighbour's child from drowning. There is therefore something in me which would be odious were it not sheer infirmity, the result of some acute disease.

You must quickly do your very best that I may love you ; that will not be difficult. In the first place, I love Franz. He

told me to love you. He told me to rely on you as I would on himself.

The first time I saw you I thought you were pretty ; but that you were cold. At the second interview I told you that I detested the nobility ; I did not know that you belonged to it. Instead of slapping my face, as I deserved, you disclosed your soul to me, as though you had known me for the last ten years. It was kind, and I at once felt I could love you ; but I do not yet love you. It is not because I am not sufficiently acquainted with you ; I know as much of you now as I shall twenty years hence. It is rather you who do not know enough of me. Being unaware whether you will be able to love me, such as I really am, I will not love you yet.

Friendship is too serious and too overruling a matter for me. If you wish me to love you, you must therefore begin by loving me ; that is quite right, I will prove it to you. A soft and white hand meets the lovely back of a porcupine. The charming animal is fully aware that the white hand will not do him any harm. He knows that he, poor wretch, is scarcely inviting enough to be made a pet of. Before returning the caresses bestowed upon him, he waits until the hand has grown accustomed to his pricks ; for, if the hand he loves shrinks from him (there is no reason why it should not), although the porcupine may exclaim, "It is not my fault," that will not at all console him.

Consider then whether you can give your heart to a porcupine. I am capable of anything. I will play a thousand silly tricks ; I will tread upon your toes ; I will make rude replies without the least provocation ; I will reproach you with a defect which you do not possess ; I will suspect you of an intention which you never had ; I will turn my back upon

you ; in short, I will make myself unbearable, until I am quite sure that I cannot make you cross and disgust you with me.

I will then carry you upon my back ; I will do your cooking ; I will wash your plates ; all you will say will sound divine to me. If you happen to tread on some dirt, I will think it smells nice. I will see you with the same eyes that I have for myself when I am well and of a cheerful humour ; that is to say that I consider myself as perfection, and all that is not of my way of thinking the object of my deep contempt. Do, then, your best that you may enter my eyes, my ears, my veins, my whole being. You will, in that case, learn that nobody on earth loves more than I, because I love without being ashamed of the reason why I love. That reason is the gratitude I feel towards those who adopt me. That is my summing up. It is not modest, but it is sincere. I consider as a jumble of words any affection which does not acknowledge its partiality, its impudence, its companionship—all that which causes the world to laugh and say : “They worship each other (*asinus asinum*).” If things are not so, tell me, pray, who on earth will love me ? Who is similar to another ? Who is not shocked and hurt a hundred times a day by his best friend, if he examine the latter from the transcendental heights of analysis, of philosophy, of criticism, *esthetics* (and all the other *ics*) ? We must always pretend that our friends are right, even in things regarding which we should be wrong to imitate them. But to do so, we must be sure that the being upon whom we confer the great right and great title of friend will never perform but good or excusable deeds, or at least deeds deserving of indulgence.

Think then, and consider whether you can be that for me. I would prefer to break off our relations at once and limit



myself to an awkward coolness, the only thing of which I am capable unless I love, in order to deceive you as regards the asperities of my charming temper. It would, nevertheless, distress me much, having met with a woman like yourself, not to be allowed to bind my life to hers.

Good night, friend; answer me at once and at length. If you should not feel any sympathy for me, by all means say so. I will not bear you any ill-will for confessing it. I will respect your frankness. If you should mistrust me, say so also; that will leave me some hope, for my defects are such as to be tolerated, and perhaps toned down by contact with you.

I have taken the liberty of dedicating to you *Simon*, a rather voluminous story, which is about to appear in the *Revue*. Not knowing what is the outward position adopted by you in Geneva, I made that dedication exceedingly mysterious, so much so that nobody will guess it applies to you, unless you should authorise me to explain myself more fully.

I was forgetting to tell you about my present life. You must know that I am still at my seat in the country. I have brought an action for judicial separation against my husband, who ran away, leaving me mistress of the battle-field. I am awaiting the decision of the Court. I am all alone in that large isolated mansion; not a servant sleeps under my roof, not even a dog. The silence is so profound at night (you will scarcely credit it, and yet it is a fact), that, when I open my window and the wind is favourable, I distinctly hear the town clock strike, although the town is three miles distant as the crow flies. I do not receive a soul; I am leading a nun's life. I am expecting the issue of my suit, upon which depends the bread of my old age; for you may be sure that I shall never

be able to earn enough to pay for the expenses of the hospital where my husband's kindness would let me die.

Just think! He had the happy thought of trying to kill me one evening when he was drunk. Until that kind whim of conjugal murder restores to me my native place, my old house, and five or six wheat-fields, which will support me when my long night toils have driven me to idiocy, I follow the example of Sixtus Quintus.\* My horse is safe under the tent, and not a fly can be heard about my deserted cloister.

The gardener and his wife, who are my *factota*, begged of me not to make them sleep in the house. I wanted to know their motive. At last, the husband, with his eyes demurely cast down, said to me: "It is because madame has such an ugly head, that my wife, being in the family-way, might become ill through fright." He meant the skull on my table (at least, so he swore afterwards); for I did not at all relish the joke and lost my temper. I afterwards thought that that ugly-looking skull might produce a great effect. I then allowed my gardener to leave me, with the conviction that my keeping that skull was a sign of penance and piety on my part.

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\* Allusion to a story which relates that, upon the meeting of the Holy Conclave for the election of a successor to the Pope, Sixtus Quintus, then a cardinal, and who secretly nursed in his heart the ambition of obtaining the tiara, pretended to be so broken down and feeble that, hopping about on crutches, he had to be carried to the Hall of Conclave. Thinking that his end was near, the Sacred College, as a truce to their dissensions, resolved to elect him Pope. But, at the *Te Deum* that followed his election, Sixtus, having secured his aim, threw up his crutches and sang out the hymn of thanks in a clear and powerful voice, that took everybody by surprise.—TRANSLATOR.

As it is, three miles from here, four thousand simpletons believe me bent on my knees in sackcloth and ashes, weeping over my sins like Magdalene. The awakening will be terrible. On the morning of my victory I will throw up my crutch, and ride round the four corners of the town upon my galloping horse. If you should hear that I am converted to reason, to public morality, to the love of the laws of exception, to Louis Philippe, the almighty father, and to his son, Poulot Rosolin, and to his holy Catholic chamber, do not be surprised at anything. I am capable of writing an ode to the King, or a sonnet to M. Jacqueminot.\*

I have written to you the most stupid stuff in the world. Try to do the same, and to place yourself on a level with me. Say what you may, you are compelled to do so.

Good night. Yours,

GEORGE.

*To M. ADOLPHE GUÉROULT, Paris.*

LA CHATRE, 9th November, 1835.

MY DEAR BOY,

I must answer two letters from you, and will do so before setting to work, for I have laid the plot of a novel in my head. Although you may say that I make a fuss, you will hear no more from me, for the next two or three months, than if I were dead.

I wrote the opening pages yesterday, and am in all the heat of the fire. You know what it is. In all things the beginning is the great time. That is perhaps the reason why

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\* General Viscount Jean François Jacqueminot, appointed in 1842 Commander-in-Chief of the National Guard.

I am so warm a Republican, and you so opposed to Saint-Simonism. Be it as it may, follow your course if you think it is the right one. We all aim at what is good, though we employ different means to reach our object. We always quarrel, because every one of us thinks he possesses more sense than his neighbour, and consoles himself for going wrong when perceiving that other people do not go better; sad consolation, indeed! which does a deal of harm in our time. All those petty squabbles kept up by everybody's vanity do not better the situation; on the contrary. Were all those who profess sound views and sentiments to welcome each other with tolerance, they would do double the work.

You cannot deny, my dear *Marius à Minturnes*, that my good faith is superior to yours. You run down our Republicans from head to foot, whereas I never cease admiring your Saint-Simonians, and placing them above all others.

I even cannot own that I love Republicans to excess. I love those among them who are my friends, and study the others out of curiosity, or receive them out of politeness and good breeding.

That has nothing to do with principles.

Robespierre was a Saint-Simonian to the core. He was in favour of the prompt and violent execution of the system. You are for a slow and evangelical progress. Everybody, according to his temperament, should be Republican after Robespierre's manner, or Saint-Simonian after *Enfantin's*.\* The one would pull down while the other would build up. Be

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\* Barthélemy Prosper Enfantin, known as "Père Enfantin," the self-constituted high priest of the "Industrial Church" (*Église Industrielle*), founded by Claude Henri, Count de Saint-Simon, the nearest relation of the Duke de Saint-Simon, author of the celebrated *Mémoires*.

convinced that those dreams will some day be realised; there will then be a close alliance between us, and you will not be anything without us.

You know how Christianity established itself; that is, very wrongly, even in what is termed its best period. It so flagrantly disagreed with the manners of the time, that crimes were committed and sentiments most opposed to its institution and to its spirit cherished in its name. Twelve army corps, commanded by the twelve apostles, would, I believe, have been of more avail than Paul\* repeating the cowardly phrase: "Render unto Cæsar," etc.

Follow your idea, if you think you are doing right in talking about, and if your conscience is at rest. Laugh at the reproaches which I make respecting your growing lukewarmness, as I myself do at the sneers which I address to my recent enthusiasm. I, however, think that you are mistaken, and that the love of equality is the only thing which has not varied within me since I was born. I never could accept a master.

By-the-bye, my suit is going on; it is progressing fairly. The baron has given up his defence; he asks for money, and plenty of it. I give it him; he is bound to leave me alone, and everything is right. As for what people will think of it in Paris, it concerns me just as little as what they think in China of Gustave Planche.†

Public opinion is a harlot which we ought to kick out of our way, when we are in the right. We should never submit ourselves to affronts in order to obtain salutations and genu-

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\* *Sic* in original.

† Gustave Planche, a friend of George Sand.

flexions in public. I should like to see you swallow menaces and blows! Nonsense! you would risk your life in order to avenge the insult in your offender's blood.

Do you fancy that, being a woman, I have no personal dignity to defend? Nonsense again! I remember that you were once the advocate of women's enfranchisement.

We do not understand fencing, and are not permitted to call upon our husbands to fight duels with us. Society is quite right; those gentlemen would kill us, which would cause them too much delight:

Our only resource is to shout aloud, to appeal to three fools in black gowns, who pretend to render justice, and who, by virtue of certain *kindness* of legislation towards the poor slaves threatened with death, condescend to say to us: "The law allows you not to love your lord and master any more, and if the house is yours, to send him away."

Despite all I say here, I have kept the whole affair as secret as possible, out of charity towards my husband. Up to the present nothing of it has transpired, even in the little town where I live, which is really wonderful. That will last as long as it can. Do not, therefore, speak of it to anybody whatever.

Good night, friend; I embrace you cordially. I am really sorry that you cannot relate the least fact as witness, for the inquiries are about to bring together a score of friends round me. Thanks to Duteil, Planet,\* and your humble servant, it will be impossible to find a more witty assembly than our lovely meeting promises to be. Business matters, and chiefly anything relating to my suit, are topics that will rigidly be excluded from our conversation. That will constitute my

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\* A friend of George Sand.

last farewell to my friends, in case my application be rejected.

In the meantime my book will be ready. I shall go to Paris after the issue of my suit. Good-bye; let me hear from you if you can spare the time. Send me the lithographs, and give a hearty shake of the hand to Vinçard\* on my behalf.

G. S.

*To THE EDITOR of the "JOURNAL DE L'INDRE."*

LA CHATRE, 9th November, 1835.

SIR,

An oracle, whose signature does not betray the incognito, attacks with merciless brutality, in the *feuilleton* of your paper, the morality of my works. I give up to criticism all my literary defects and all the obscurity of my reasonings. But, in this province, my adopted country, I forbid any worshipper of the excesses of society to select me as a holocaust, whenever it pleases him to do homage to the powers which he wishes to render propitious, either in order to acquire a name for himself so as to make up for his want of talent, or to obtain protection in this benighted world, which often accepts declamation in place of proof.

A few weeks ago, one of our most talented pens wrote: "It is very disheartening to write for people who do not know how to read." I know something more grievous still; it is to write for people who *will* not read. The profession of every journalist in the pay of the social state invests him with the

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\* A leading Saint-Simonian.

right of ascertaining the thoughts of an author by merely looking at the colour of the cover of a book.

The public is also aware of that; it is, therefore, to the public that I appeal to do justice in regard to the coarse and highly improper interpretations of the chaste critic, who pretends to have discovered the *definitive aim and result* of all my works. I herewith declare that that enlightened judge of *Indiana, Valentine, Lélia, and Jacques*, never read any of those books, and that, if he did really read them, he failed to understand them.

Should he feel hurt by the above declaration and denial, my sex forbidding my asking for or giving satisfaction, I appoint as my defender any countryman of mine possessed of a heart and conscience, who may happen to meet him.

I have, etc.,

GEORGE SAND.

*To MAURICE DUDEVANT, Collège Henri IV.*

LA CHATRE, 15th December, 1835.

MY KIND CHERUB,

Your little letter is very nice, despite your great childishness. You may laugh at the *pear* \* if it amuses you; but, at your age, you must not hate anybody. It would serve no purpose; you cannot yet be of any service to men, nor can you usefully interfere with the enemies of mankind. Louis Philippe, it is true, is the enemy of mankind; but you are grossly mistaken in calling him a *big fool*. He is, perhaps, the shrewdest and

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\* Reference to a popular song containing disrespectful allusions to King Louis Philippe's head, which was therein likened to a pear.



cleverest man in France. He, unfortunately, makes an evil use of his talents, and, instead of diffusing love and virtue in his midst, he defiles all that surrounds him. He really dishonours France which tolerates him. It is a great pity that one man can, by flattering vice and bad inclinations, degrade a whole nation and urge it to evil.

You reason very well otherwise; but you are again mistaken when you say, "*Nature* is unjust towards a great many men." You mean to say *society*.

*Nature*, my dear boy, is a good mother. It is God Himself, or, at least, His work. It is to nature that we owe crops, forests, fruit, meadows, and fields—the beautiful flowers of which I am so fond—and the glowing butterflies, of which you take so much care. Nature, of herself, offers all her products to man, who sows and reaps. The trees do not refuse their fruits to the wayfarer, who plucks them as he passes by; and as fine vegetables can grow in the turf of a simple gardener as in the garden of a prince.

*Society* is something else: it means the conventions which man has made with respect to the sharing out of nature's productions. It was neither justice nor the feelings of nature which dictated those laws; it was might. The weak did not receive as much as the others; as for cripples, they had no share at all. The right of succession preserved that inequality, after which, in civilised times—like ours, for instance—the most learned and the cleverest became wealthy; although, for that matter, they never ceased to be wicked. Unfortunate ignorant people will always vegetate in dire poverty if nothing is done for them. Therefore you may say that *society* is unjust; not nature.

We shall often speak on that subject, and, little by little,

shall understand each other ; for the present I do not wish to tire your mind. You will soon read a beautiful book which they happily use in colleges ; it is the *De viris illustribus*, by Plutarch. You must read it carefully. All the noble sides of the human soul are exposed and pointed out in that book.

I shall go to Paris at Christmas, because you will then have holidays, and I shall take advantage of them. Take care to reckon how many days you are out with your father, from the day of his arrival in Paris until Christmas. Do not fail to do so. I will, by-and-by, tell you why ; and recollect also all my instructions. You were quite sensible in not showing your letter to Buloz. You must keep to yourself the letters I write to you.

Farewell, my love ; I kiss you a thousand times.

YOUR GEORGE.

*TO THE SAME.*

LA CHATRE, 3rd January, 1836.

I received your letter, my darling child ; and see that you very well understood mine. Your comparison is very good, and, since you make use of such fine metaphors, we will again try to ascend together the mountain where virtue abides. It is indeed very hard to climb it ; for at every step we meet with objects of seduction which endeavour to mislead us. It is of those things I wish to speak to you, and of all defects that which you must fear most is too great a love of self. It is the defect of all men and women.

With some it produces the vanity of rank ; with others the ambition of wealth ; with nearly all, egotism. Never, at

any period of the world's history, has selfishness been professed in so open and revolting a manner as in our own days. About fifty years ago an obstinate war began between justice and covetousness. The struggle is far from being over, although covetousness has now the upper hand.

When you are older you will read the history of that revolution about which you have heard people talk so much, and which enabled justice and truth to make big strides. But those who commenced it were not the strongest, and those who laboured for it with most generosity were vanquished by others who, loving wealth and pleasures, made use of the great word Republic only in order to become a sort of princes full of whims and vices. Such men were then the masters, for the people were weak because of their ignorance. Among those who might take up the people's cause and help them with their knowledge, there is one out of a thousand who prefers the satisfaction of doing good to that of being rich and giving way to enjoyment and vanity. Thus, the least numerous class, that which is educated, will always prevail against the ignorant class, although the latter comprise the bulk of nations.

See the advantage and necessity of education. Without it we live in a sort of servitude, since a wise, virtuous, sober, and respectable peasant is daily under the direction of some wicked, drunken, brutal, and unjust man, whose only superiority is that he knows how to read and write. Consider what a man is who, having received education, is no better for it. Conceive how guilty in the eyes of God he is who, aware of the misfortunes and wants of his fellow-creatures, being able to devote his heart and life to their aid, goes unconcerned every night to sleep in a soft bed, or fills

his belly at a good table, whispering to himself: "All is right; society is thoroughly well organised. It is just that I should be rich, and that there should be paupers. What is mine is mine by all means; I must, therefore, shoot down all those who do not humbly beg for a pittance with uncovered heads; and should they even be polite I must brutally eject them, if they should importune and trouble me. I do so because I have a right to do it."

Such are the arguments of selfish people; such are the feelings of that immense army of pitiless hearts and degraded souls which constitute the *National Guard*. Among all those men who defend property with guns and bayonets there are many more stupid than wicked ones. With the majority their feelings are the result of an anti-liberal education. Their parents and their schoolmasters, while teaching them how to read, told them that the best state of things is that which preserves everybody's property. They call revolutionary brigands and assassins those who give their lives for the cause of the people.

It is because I do not wish you to be like one of those men, without soul or reason, that I write to you, in private and *secretly*, what I think of it all. Reflect upon it, and tell me whether it appears in the same light to your heart and mind. Tell me whether you think *just* that mode of sharing unequally the products of the earth: fruit, grain, cattle, materials of all sorts, and gold (that metal which represents all kinds of enjoyment, because a small fragment of it is taken in exchange for all the other comforts of life). In short, tell me whether the repartition of the gifts of creation is well and justly carried out, when one gets an enormous share, another less, a third almost nothing, and a fourth nothing at all.

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It seems to me that the earth belongs to God Himself, who made it and entrusted it to man in order that he might use it as an eternal refuge. But God cannot have contemplated that some people should die of surfeit, while others are starving. All that may be said on that point will not prevent me from feeling sad and indignant whenever I see a beggar crying at the door of a rich man.

I shall have to write many more letters to you and to have many more chats with you, before touching upon the means likely to remedy the present state of things. I do not want to cram your head at once; you must have time to consider everything and to reply in time whether you think as I do, and whether you fully understand me. We will leave off here. *Self-love is to be tempered, limited, and controlled.* That is to say, we must accustom ourselves to the comforts that cost least money, and so enable us to give more to those who are in want of it. We will together endeavour to discover that virtue, and, if we should not quite succeed, we shall at least possess just principles and good intentions.

I will not conceal from you the truth, which may already have dawned upon you, that the principles I speak of are in flagrant opposition to those taught in your *lycées*.\* Being ruled by the spirit of the Government, *lycées* will always profess the principles of the powers that be. Were Napoleon still on the throne, they would preach to you the Empire and war. Were the Republic firmly established, they would tell you to be Republicans. You must not heed the comments which your professors, or even the books which they give

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\* Government schools for higher education in France.

you, indulge in as regards history. Those books are written by pedants, the slaves of power.

Often, when reading the relation of the noble deeds of ancient times, written by the men of to-day, you will observe that heroes are depicted as criminals. Your common sense and the justice of your heart will redress those hypocritical judgments. You will perceive the facts and appreciate the men who brought them about. Recollect that, since the beginning of the world, those who laboured for the liberty and honour of their brethren, were great men. Those who only promoted their own fame and ambition made a culpable use of their great qualities. Those, in fact, who thought only of their pleasures were real brutes.

But you will understand that our correspondence must remain secret, and that you must neither show it nor speak about it. I also desire you not to make any mention of it to your father. You are aware that his opinions differ from mine. You must respectfully listen to all he may tell you; but your conscience is free, and you will choose between his ideas and mine, those which you may think the best. I shall never ask you to repeat to me what he may have said to you; in like manner, you must not acquaint him with what I write to you.

Take care, then, to leave my letters in your desk at college; they will be handed to you by Emmanuel,\* to whom you must remit your reply three or four days afterwards.

Do you well understand me? In that way, nobody will see what we write, and we shall avoid contradictions. You

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\* Emmanuel Arago.

will have time to read my letters and to reply to them without hurrying yourself.

My darling boy, you are what I most love in this world. I have gone to spend some time in La Châtre; I live at Duteil's.

Farewell. A thousand kisses. Study history with great care; that is a great point.

*To THE SAINT-SIMONIAN FAMILY, of Paris.*

LA CHÂTRE, 15th February, 1836.

Being unable to thank each of you separately to-day, permit me, brethren, to thank you collectively through Vinçard. You have displayed towards me a sympathy and benevolence full of charm and kindness. I did not deserve your attention, nor had I done anything worthy of such honour. I am not one of those strong and vigorous minds which can bind themselves by oath to a new path. Besides, out of fidelity to old affections of my childhood, to old social hatreds, I cannot separate the idea of *republic* from that of *regeneration*; the salvation of the world seems to me to rely upon us for destruction, upon you for rebuilding. Whilst the energetic arms of republicans will build the *town*, the sacred predications of Saint-Simonians will build the *city*. That is my hope. I believe that my old comrades must strike great blows, and that you, invested with a sacerdoce of peace and innocence, cannot dip your Levitical garments in the blood of strife. You are priests; we, soldiers: each has his part to play, each his grandeur and his weakness. The priest does, at times, dread the bellicose impatience of the soldier, and

the latter, in his turn, rails at the sublime longanimity of the priest. Let us have no apprehension as regards the future. Truth is unique, and the day on which it shines for all, we shall, all of us, fall down on our knees before the same God, and unite our hands in a holy impulse of enthusiasm.

That day is yet remote; we must still, I fear, see many centuries of corruption, and, while your sacred phalanx will often still have to sing in wildernesses without echo, it will perhaps happen to us that we shall in vain have crossed the *Red Sea*, and must carry on anew the struggle against the elements on the morrow of the day we believed them to be subdued. It is the fate of mankind to expiate its ignorance and weakness by trials and reverses. Your mission is to instil new life into it by means of your counsels and to pour out the balm of concord and hope. Proceed then with the achievement of that sacred task, and recollect that your brothers are not the men of the past, but those of the future.

You have committed one single fault only, and that lately; but it is a serious fault in my eyes, and I will mention it to you in the sincerity of my heart, because I love you too much to conceal from you one single thought of those with which you inspire me. You tried to keep away from us. Following up your example, we ourselves committed a similar fault, and the two families, the offspring of the same mother, I mean of the same idea, disagreed on the battle-field. That fault will delay the advent of the heralded times. It is more serious coming from you, who are messengers of peace and love, than from us, ministers of war, swords of extermination.

As for me, poor hermit, lost in the crowd, a kind of





rhapsodist, devout preserver of old Plato's enthusiasm, silent worshipper of Christ's tears, amazed and wavering admirer of great Spinoza, a kind of sickly and meaningless being called poet, incapable of formulating conviction and proof otherwise than with narratives and complaints, the evil and the good of human things, I feel that I can not be either a soldier or a priest, a master or a disciple, a prophet or an apostle; I will be for all a feeble but devoted brother; I do not know and cannot teach anything; I have no strength, I cannot perform any feat. I can sing the holy war and the holy peace; for I believe in the necessity of both. In my poet's mind, I dream of Homeric struggles, which, with throbbing heart, I witness from the mountain top, or in the midst of which I rush under the feet of the horses, intoxicated with enthusiasm and holy vengeance. I also dream of the morrow of the storm, a magnificent sunrise, altars adorned with flowers, legislators crowned with olive wreaths, the dignity of man vindicated, man freed from man's tyranny, woman from that of woman, a tutelage of love performed by the priest over man and by the latter over woman, a government whose name would be *counsel*, and not *sway*, *persuasion*, and *might*. In the meantime, I will sing to the diapason of my voice, and my teachings shall be humble; for I am the child of my time, I was subjected to its miseries, I shared its errors, I drank at all its sources of life and death, and, although I may be more fervent than the masses in my desires for their salvation, I am not more competent than they to point out the road to it. Let me weep over and pray for that Jerusalem which has lost her gods and has not yet hailed her Messiah. My vocation is to hate evil, to love good, to kneel before the beautiful.

Treat me, therefore, like a true friend. Open your hearts to me and do not appeal to my brain. Minerva is not therein and could not thence emerge. My soul is full of contemplations and wishes which the world scoffs at, believing them obnoxious and impracticable. If I am attracted towards you by affection and confidence, it is because you possess within yourselves a treasure of hope whose flame you communicated to me, instead of extinguishing the faint spark glimmering within the depths of my heart.

Farewell. I will preserve your gifts like so many relics ; I will dress the table on which I write with the flowers which the industrious hands of your sisters wove for me. I will often peruse the beautiful canticle which Vinçard sent to me, and in my memory I will unite the sweet prayers of your poets with those I every night address to God. My children shall be adorned with the lovely things you made, and the jewels which you intended for my use shall be transmitted to them as an honourable and cherished heritage. All I desire is to see you soon, so as to thank you myself with an affectionate shake of the hand.

Yours in heart,

GEORGE SAND.

*To MAURICE DUDEVANT, Collège Henri IV.*

LA CHATRE, 17th February, 1836.

MY GOOD LITTLE DEAR,

It is Carnival time. Everybody enjoys himself, or pretends to do so. I should also enjoy myself if you were with me, and so would you. I am staying at Duteil's, where

we are spending the "*jours gras*" \* in a very gay and pleasant fashion. Every evening we have a masked ball. I disguise all the children, Duteil takes his fiddle, we light four tapers, and begin dancing. If you were here, with your sister, the fête would be complete. Alas! the urchins here make me feel all the more the absence of my own.

Were I free to leave my business affairs, I should not now be diverting myself with them, but with you, my poor little dears. Do you at least amuse yourselves? You went out with your father, and Solange with her aunt; tell me how you spent your time. It is very easy to enjoy ourselves with the people we love. For me there is no real pleasure without you.

In the holidays we will enjoy ourselves; for to enjoy oneself means to be happy; and you know that when we three are together we do not want anybody else in order to be joyful all the day long.

I contemplated going to Paris for the Carnival; but the people with whom I am doing business kept me waiting, and delayed my journey. Another fortnight will therefore elapse before I can come to kiss you. Reserve for March some of your days out, so that I may have you with me every Thursday and Sunday for two or three weeks. This time I shall be sure to come; I do not foresee any possible obstacle to my journey. Do not, however, speak about it; you know, once for all, that you must not say anything of what I write to you, not even things trifling in appearance.

So you are received by the Queen? That is all right. You are still too young for any importance to be attached to your visits; but as you grow older you will reflect upon the

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\* Days immediately preceding Lent.

consequences of being acquainted with aristocrats. I do not think you are very closely acquainted with Her Majesty, and I believe that you are invited only because you belong to the same *form* as the Duke of Montpensier.\* But if you were ten years older, your opinions would forbid your accepting the invitation.

Under no circumstances must a man dissemble in order to obtain the favours of power ; and the amusements which Montpensier offers to you are already favours. Think of this. Happily those favours do not bind you in any shape ; but if it should happen that people were to question you before His Royal Highness regarding your opinions you would, I hope, reply, as becomes a child, that you cannot yet have any ; you would also, I am sure, add, as becomes a man, that you are a Republican by race and nature ; that is to say, that you have already been taught to wish for equality, and that your heart is only disposed to believe in that form of justice. You would not, I hope, be deterred by the fear of offending the Prince. If, for a dinner or a ball, you were capable of flattering him, or even if you feared to displease him by your frankness, that alone would be great cowardice.

You must not, however, display improper arrogance. If you were to speak ill of his father before that child you would commit a sort of crime. But if, in order to make yourself agreeable, you were to speak favourably of the King, although being aware that nothing good can be said of him, you might some day be capable of selling your conscience for money, pleasure, or vanity. I know that will never be the case, but it is my duty to point out to you the drawbacks of relations with those who consider themselves the superiors of others,

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\* The youngest son of Louis Philippe.

and to whom society does indeed give authority over the rest.

Refrain, therefore, from believing that a prince is naturally better and more useful to listen to than any other man. Princes, on the contrary, are our natural enemies, and, however good the child of a king may be, he is destined to become a tyrant. We are doomed to be reviled, trampled upon, or persecuted by him.

Do not, then, allow yourself to be too much dazzled by fêtes and good dinners. Accustom yourself early to be an *old Roman*, that is, proud, cautious, sober, and averse to the pleasures which entail the loss of honour and sincerity.

Good night, my cherub; write to me. Love your old George, who himself loves you better than life.

*To M. EUGÈNE PELLETAN, Paris.*

BOURGES, 28th February, 1836.

I received your letter to-day only. I do not live in Paris, and for nine months out of the year live nowhere.

You are wonderfully witty, full of talent and imagination. But your simplicity is more affected than real.

Work on; you are already a poet, if to be one it is sufficient to make good verse. If it require something else, you are capable of acquiring it. As soon as you have acquired it, get a printer.

You are deficient in plasticity; you are aware of it: Try to display it in all your productions. In their wildest compositions, Byron and Goethe did not free themselves from it.

Do not belong to any school; do not imitate any model.

Those who pose as such nearly always envy the qualities of the talent which they censure and put down in their followers.

Keep away from Paris; it is the grave of poets and artists. Everything there is *swellish*.

“Le troupeau blanc des flots” is an admirable expression.

“De l’or avec du fer” is detestable.

“. . . Rien faire qui vaille un sou” will never have either grace or sense.

. . . “De tout . . . de rien, du prix des moutons cette année,” is truly simple and charming, etc., etc.

Do not be a compound of nobleness and platitude, of grandeur and meanness. Be correct, that is rarer than being eccentric as the time goes. It is much more common to please by bad taste than to receive the cross of honour.

Hugo, the greatest innovator of our times, never rid himself of the old classics which he so much ridiculed, although in a thousand instances he is greater than they. Beauty in detail is nothing when it does not also apply to the whole.

Living as I do, I cannot see you; but I feel an interest in you. You are entitled to it. I wish and predict for you a future, provided you be severe towards yourself and patient. But, be sure that if you produce a good work, you will not require anybody. Be sure, likewise, that all the literary friendships in the world will not ensure true success for a careless production.

Yours,

GEORGE SAND.

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*To M. ADOLPHE GUÉROULT, Paris.*

LA CHATRE, March, 1836.

FRIEND,

I much admire your perplexity respecting the title which you ought to give me. Methinks my name is George, and that I am your friend, in the masculine or the feminine, as you prefer. I do not understand compliments. If I did not feel regard, affection, and confidence for you, I should not display those feelings *towards* you. After having acted so, I do not know what can restrain you, and pray you to remember that I am not prudish. Therefore, address me by what name you please ; but write to me about yourself and my youngsters. I thank you a thousand times for the friendship which you display towards them. They do not now appreciate its worth ; but I will myself, as long as I live, discharge their debt of affection and gratitude.

They will both go out for the Easter holidays, and you will have the opportunity of seeing Maurice at Buloz'. Take him out with you for a walk so as to relieve Buloz of such a heavy burden, and keep me fully acquainted with the behaviour of my son. Lecture him in a paternal way ; he is a good fellow, and will understand you if you speak to him reasonably.

Solange is amusing with her *poniard* (pain) in her heart or stomach. I fancy that the latter organ is the one that plays the most important part in her life. She will, I think, sleep out during the Easter holidays, and my aunt of the Elysée-Bourbon\* will take care of her ; for, out of respect for morals, she must be domiciled with females.

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\* A *quartier*, or district of Paris, near the Palais de l'Elysée.

Will you be good enough to take her brother to her whenever he wishes it, and to fetch him back afterwards to Buloz', or at least to watch over him during the journey to and fro, so that he may only be with safe people, who will not lose him on the road? I rely upon you, Papet, Boucoiran, and Buloz.

However great my sorrow at losing you, perhaps for a long time, I cannot dissuade you from your contemplated voyage to Egypt. To travel is to learn, to learn is to exist. You will not go to the East and will not return thence without having acquired, by the journey, much knowledge that will make you still superior to what you already are. Mundane people and women travel without deriving any profit from it; it will not be thus with you. You will observe, you will see various races of men, different modes of social organisations. You will not neglect to learn their history, if not acquainted with it already, and to examine their inclinations and customs.

You will know all that, and, whatever talent or merit I may acknowledge in you, you will not very perceptibly or usefully alter the face of the world. I have got my own ideas thereon. I neither hope nor desire you to share them; for they bring suffering to those who possess them and are of no use to other people. But I feel sure that you will come back riper, fuller, and, consequently, calmer and more apt to deal with things of reality.

The only disadvantage I see in your project is that a new stay with Saint-Simonian leaders will increase in you the sentiment of fanaticism for men and proper names. I do not relish that sentiment; I think it mean, debasing, and stupid. I am often subject to it, and, scarcely twenty-four hours ago, I carried on a severe struggle with myself in order to shake



it off, as it was creeping over me, in the presence of a politician of imposing appearance.

I never enrolled myself under the colours of any leader, and, though preserving regard, respect, and admiration towards all those who nobly profess a religion, I remain convinced that there is not, under heaven, a man who deserves that we should bend our knee before him. Place yourself at the service of an idea, but not in *Enfantin's* power. Ideas enlarge and modify themselves in the presence of truths. The systems devised by individuals are always impeded in their progress by the whim, the error, or the powerlessness of the Maker, Who will not countenance rebellion among His creatures. Make special note of that.

I have talked with the Saint-Simonians, with the Carlists, with Lamennais, Coëssin, the moderate party, and, yesterday, in imagination, I talked with Robespierre himself. I found in them all a great deal of virtue, probity, intelligence, and reason, and he who startled me most is the man whose ideas I most detest, but whose individuality I most admire. It is the last-mentioned; which proves how easy it is to mislead men and to turn God's gifts to abuse; but I swear by him that, if the Extreme Left comes into power, my head will be cut off, like so many more, for I intend to have my say.

What I see in the midst of those renovating sects is a squandering of generous feelings and lofty thoughts; it is a tendency towards social amelioration, an impossibility of producing at present, for want of a head to that great body with hundreds of arms, which, not knowing whom to attack tears itself in pieces. That conflict, as yet, is only raising a noise and dust. We are not in the era when it will build societies and people them with perfected men.

You are at liberty to believe the reverse. Hope is a good and strengthening thing. But the more you believe in near success, the more you must promote it by unheard-of efforts. Labour towards enlarging your brains. They are narrow, and that is what misleads you all. There is only room in them for one plan of campaign. When the nature of the ground changes, you do not know how to change your path. There is a flag on your lance, a name on your tongue, and you make it a fatal and stupid point of honour not to modify either as you grow more enlightened.

I should like to see a man of heart and intellect seeking everywhere for truth, and tearing every shred of it from those who had skinned and shared it between them. I should like to see him entering all sects in order to know and judge them. I wish that, instead of scorning and railing at him on account of his mobility, men would listen to him as being the most enlightened and zealous among the priests of the future.

But obstinacy is turned into a virtue, it being suited to the passions of some and to the ignorance of others. If you are not magnificently organised to be a leader (and your nature is a hundred times too lofty to be a soldier), have neither foolish presumption nor humble servility, evidently you are not destined either to obey or to command. Remember what I now tell you: some day you will not believe in any religious creed, in any political party, in any social system. You will see for men only one possibility of amelioration, subjected to a thousand vicissitudes. You will perceive that, according to the season, men require a roof of stone, of straw, or of paper to shelter themselves, but that they would soon be stifled in your diamond palaces, the dreams of youth!

Go on, nevertheless, and live! Help to provide a stone for an edifice which will never be either perfect or durable, but which future generations will continue to improve. Exert yourself so that what is going wrong may go somewhat better, but exert yourself without too much pride. It might happen later on that you would, as at times you have already done, fall into depression at witnessing what little you have been able to perform; and you must admit that in those moments of depression you are obviously below your own standard.

It is not impossible that, in the midst of all my sermons, I might also devote myself to till the field with a black pin and a tooth-pick. Do not be in a hurry to start for Egypt. It is quite possible that I might contrive to be sent there, in order to endeavour to bring about a fusion between this or that shade of opinion.

My life as a woman is over, and since people have made a little reputation for me and given me some sort of influence (which I never coveted or deserved), it will perhaps happen that I shall also, for my part, embrace a young man's calling.

I grieve to see treasures of virtue and courage being isolated from each other, and, if I could succeed in blending together the productions of five pairs of arms, I should think I had done my share, considering how weak mine are. Do not speak of that to anybody, and wait for me until May. I will tell you how I am getting on.

Farewell, friend.

Yours cordially,

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. FRANZ LISZT, Geneva.*

LA CHATRE, 5th May, 1836.

MY DEAR BOY AND BROTHER,

I pray you to forgive my long-continued silence. I have been much upset and terribly busy since I last wrote to you. My suit is won, seeing that the adversary, having bound himself in honour not to plead, took it into his head to break his word and forget his bond and oath, like so many trifles no longer in fashion. If the possession of my children and the security of my life were not at stake, it would not, indeed, be worth while to defend them at the cost of so many vexations. I struggle more out of duty than out of necessity.

Such are the motives of my long silence. I was awaiting the settlement of my fate in order to tell you the present and the future. From procrastination to procrastination dear Themis has carried me on until to-day, without my being able to decide upon anything for the morrow. But for all those deceptions I should long ago have been beside you. That is my dream, it is the Eldorado which I promise myself whenever my suit and my work leave me free to indulge in schemes for a quarter of an hour. Shall I ever enter that fine castle in the air? Shall I some day be seated at the feet of the kind and beautiful Mary,\* under the piano of your excellency, or upon some Swiss rock, with the illustrious Doctor *Ratissimo*?

Alas! I am but a poor miserable devil! I always lived with my eyes uplifted, looking up at the stars, while the well was close to me, and a lot of muddy, squeaking

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\* The Countess d'Agoult.

myrmidons, full of hatred, I know not against whom, furious, I know not why, were contriving to push me into it. Let us hope!

If you should not start before the end of June, I may perhaps come and meet you, and spend a few days with you; after which you will take your flight towards Italy, happy bird, whose wings people do not wickedly and cruelly pluck off; as for me, more crippled and more modest, I will go and settle upon the bank of some miniature lake, there to sleep for the rest of the season.

I have been to spend a month in Paris, and have seen all my friends there: Meyerbeer, on whom I am just now writing at some length (I adore *The Huguenots*); Madame Jal,\* for whom I have had the good fortune to do something; your mother, who kindly came to kiss me; Henri Heine, who is falling into the monomania of puns, etc., etc. I did not see Jules Janin, and do not know whether he wrote against me. You are the first to inform me of it; I will make no inquiry into the matter. It is my good luck not to read any newspaper or to hear nothing about it.

I cannot understand Sainte-Beuve. I have loved him paternally. He devoted his life to vex me, to grumble at me, to pry into my actions, and to suspect me; so much so that I at last sent him to the devil. He became angry, and we are on bad terms, as it seems. I think that he scarcely conceives what friendship is, but, to make up for that deficiency, he possesses a profound knowledge of self-love, not to say of self alone.

Everything considered, *Jocelyn* is, in my opinion, a bad production. Commonplace thoughts, false sentimentality,

\* An authoress.

loose style, obsolete and diffuse verse, subject flat, personages dragging on everywhere, affectation united to negligence; still, in the midst of all, there are pages and chapters which do not exist in any language, and which I read seven times in succession, sobbing like a silly. Those parts are easy to notice; they all relate to the *theosophical* sentiment, as phrenologists put it. Therein the poet is sublime; his description, often diffuse, vague, and too subtle, is, in certain passages, truly delightful. To sum up, it is a pity that Lamartine wrote *Jocelyn*, but it is lucky for the publisher that *Jocelyn* was written by Lamartine.

I made the acquaintance of the latter. He was very kind to me. We smoked together in a drawing-room in company with the most select society, but where they tolerate all my fancies. He gave me some excellent tobacco and some very poor poetry. He appeared to me a very kind-hearted man, rather affected, and full of vanity. I also formed the acquaintance of Berryer, who seemed to me a much nicer fellow, possessed of more frankness and simplicity, but not serious enough for me; for I am very serious, although I may not appear so.

. . . I made the acquaintance and won the friendship of David Richard.\* We are bound by a twofold tie: the Abbé de Lamennais, whom I adore, as you know, and Charles Didier,† my old and faithful friend. By-the-bye, you wish for particulars respecting a new story concerning me, and wherein he is said to play a prominent part. I do not know what it is.

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\* Doctor David Richard, the learned phrenologist, friend of the Abbé de Lamennais and Charles Didier.

† Charles Didier, a distinguished *littérateur*, friend of the Abbé de Lamennais.

What do people say? What they say about yourself and me. You know how correct that is; so you may judge of the rest. Many persons, in Paris and in the provinces, say that it is not Madame d' . . . who is in Geneva with you, but I! Didier is in the same position as yourself respecting a lady who is not I certainly.

. . . That letter of yours is the third which I had not yet answered. To-day I give you *your money's worth*. Good morning! it is six o'clock a.m. The nightingale is singing, and the smell of a lilac tree reaches me through a nasty, winding, black, and dirty little street, where I live in the pretty town of La Châtre, a respectable sub-prefecture, in which my poetry is panting in the deadly atmosphere. If you were to see the place you would wonder how I can tolerate it; but here I possess good friends, excellent hosts, and, hard by the town, lovely walks—a miniature Switzerland.

Good-by, dear Franz. Tell Mary that I love her, and that it is her turn to write to me; to Doctor *Ratto* \* that he is a pedant, because he does not write. As for yourself, I kiss you heartily.

I was forgetting to tell you that I have written a novel in three volumes octavo,† but I cannot publish it before the issue of my law-suit, because it is too Republican. Buloz, who has paid for it, is much annoyed. What is all that music which you have composed? When and how shall I hear it? How fortunate you are to be a musician!

GEORGE.

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\* Short for Ratissimo.

† *Engelwald*, a novel whose plot was laid in the Tyrol and which was destroyed.

*To THE COUNTESS D'AGOULT, Geneva.*

LA CHATEL, 25th May, 1836.

You did right to open my letter ; it was a kindly act, for which I thank you, since it brings me such a kind and affectionate reply. The only thing which really grieves me is your approaching departure for Italy. However much I hurry, I cannot be free before the holidays ; but it will then not be so easy for me to join you, for where should I meet you ? Whatever you do, do not leave any place without writing to me, if but two lines, to let me know where you are and how long you intend to stay. Nothing will induce me to give up the hope of coming to spend a few weeks with you. That is one of the sweetest dreams of my life, and as, though it may not seem so, I am most steady in my purpose, be sure that, in spite of *the fates and waves*, I shall attain it.

For the present it is not advisable that I should be absent from here. My adversaries, having been openly defeated, are trying to injure me secretly. They heap calumny upon absurdity in order to estrange the opinion of my judges against me beforehand. I take no heed of them, but I wish to be able to give an account of all my doings, from day to day. Were I to go to Geneva now, people would not fail to say that I go there only to see Franz ; and they would think it very guilty on my part. Not being at liberty to tell them that between Franz and myself there is a good angel, whose presence sanctifies our friendship, I should remain under the weight of a suspicion which, among a thousand others, would serve as a pretext for denying me the care and direction of my children.



it were only a question of my fortune, I would not give it a single day of the life of my heart; but it is my progeny, my only love, and for which I would give ten finest stars of the firmament, if they belonged to me. Do not, however, leave Geneva without letting me know you are going to. Next winter I shall be free; I shall have a little money (although I did not inherit a single franc; that is nothing but the twaddle of a journalist hard at work on news), and shall certainly run after you, away from my solicitors, and rheumatism.

I need not request you to tell Franz how sorry I was he missed him, particularly by such a short time. He will, of course, aware that it must have caused me real grief. There is only one thing in this world which brings me a little comfort in the midst of my general illness: it is that you both seem happy; and the happiness of my love is more precious to me than all the happiness I have myself. I have grown so much used to do without it, even when alone at night under the eyes of God, I never feel of complaining. And yet I spend long hours in tête-à-tête with Dame "Fancy." I never go to bed before dawn in the morning; I always witness the sunrise and sunset, and my solitude being disturbed by a single being of my own species. And yet, I assure you that I never was more free of grief. When I feel low-spirited, which is very seldom, I work, forget myself over it and dream alternately. I devote an hour to the slavery of writing, and another to the pleasure of living.

My pleasure is now so pure, with all its birds chirping in the midst of all the flowers! You are too young to know how it is neither to feel nor to think. You never envied the

fate of those beautiful white stones which, in the moonlight, appear so cold, so undisturbed, so dead. Whenever I pass by them, at night, along the roads, I salute them. They are the image of strength and purity. There is no proof of their being insensible to the pleasure of not doing anything. Theirs is a contemplative life—a life of their own. Peasants are convinced that the moon possesses an action over them, *that the moonlight breaks stones and injures walls.* I also believe it. The moon is a planet made up wholly of ice and white marble. It is full of sympathy for all that resembles it, and, when lonely souls look at it, it favours them with special influence. That is why poets are called *lunatics*. If that dissertation does not satisfy you, you are very hard to please.

If you wish me to dwell upon *ancient history*, I will tell you respecting Madame A—— that I never had any sympathy for her. I used to entertain a great regard for her character; but, one day, she played me a wicked trick, a thing I least understand and can least excuse in this world. Since I wrote to you she has apologised. Was it through kindness or lightness of head and heart? I would scarcely trust her now, and, although I bear no ill-will towards her, I shall carefully avoid her (for, to be candid, I perceive after her strange behaviour to me that I do not at all know her). I have no wish to judge her; but when you have once discovered a bad disposition in a person, that person's face seems to bear a mark which never disappears and freezes you ever after. I always follow my instinct and my first impulse. Do you not do so yourself? It seemed so to me.

I do not say that I dislike Sainte-Beuve. I have entertained too much affection for him to find it possible for me to

change that feeling into indifference or antipathy, except on account of some serious wrong. I never noticed any wickedness in him, but dryness, an unreasoned, unintended, objectless perfidy, proceeding from a great *crescendo* of selfishness. I believe that I judge him better than you do. Ask Franz, who knows him better.

Abbé de Lamennais is, they say, going to settle in Paris. For me, that rumour is anything but certain. He is going there, I believe, with the intention of founding a newspaper. Will he be able to do so? That is the question. He must have a school of disciples. In morality and in politics he cannot have either, unless he make enormous concessions to our time and state of enlightenment. From what I hear from his intimate friends, there is still left in him much more of the priest than I thought. They hoped to bring him far more deeply into the circle than they have yet been able to do. He resists. They fall out and kiss one another again. Nothing is yet concluded. I earnestly wish they could come to some understanding. All the hope of *virtuous intelligence* depends on that. Lamennais cannot proceed alone.

If, abdicating the part of prophet and apocalyptic poet, he should embrace progressive action, he must have followers. The ablest general in the world cannot do anything without soldiers. But the soldiers must, in the present case, be tried and full of faith. He could easily meet with the leadership of a populace of scribblers devoid of conviction, who will use him as a flag, but will disown or betray him whenever occasion offers. If he would wish to be efficiently seconded, he must distrust men who will not dispute and argue with him before accepting his guidance. When I consider the consequences of such a compact, I confess that I myself feel quite hesitating.

I could easily agree with him upon all but dogmatical questions. But, on the latter, I should claim a certain liberty of conscience, which he certainly would decline to grant me. If he should quit Paris without having come to an arrangement with two or three persons whose devotion and resistance are on a par with mine, I should feel great consternation of heart and mind. The elements of the people's light and education will once more be cast adrift, on a whimsical ocean, stranding upon all shores, and grievously breaking themselves thereon, without having brought forth any result. The only pilot capable of guiding them will have abandoned them and left them fuller of sadness, less united, and more disheartened than ever.

If Franz possesses any influence over him, he should beseech him to ascertain and fully appreciate the extent of the mandate with which God has entrusted him. Men like him found religions, but do not accept them. That is their duty. They do not belong to the past. Their mission is to impel humanity on the road to progress: Humility of mind, scruples, orthodoxy, are monkish virtues which God forbids to reformers. If he can accomplish the task which I foresee for him, you will *yourself* be obliged to join his sacred battalion. Your intellect is more manly than that of a great many men; you can be a pure and brilliant light.

I wrote to Paris to tell them to send you a copy of the *Droit*.\* As regards my suit I am still *in statu quo*. My husband has appealed against the decision of the court. I am still at La Châtre, staying with some friends, who spoil me like a child five years old. I live in a suburb composed of

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\* A newspaper devoted to law reports, etc.

terraces built on a rocky slope; below is an admirably pretty valley. A garden of four square yards, full of roses, and a terrace just spacious enough to move in, do duty for a drawing-room, a study, and a gallery. My bedroom is large enough; it is furnished with a bed adorned with curtains of red cotton stuff—a regular peasant's bed, hard and flat, two straw-bottomed chairs, and a deal table. My window opens six feet above the terrace. Through the hedging of the orchard I come and go at night, without having to open any door, and thus to disturb anybody, whenever inclined for a stroll in my four square yards of flowers.

I sometimes go alone for a ride at dusk. I return home at midnight. My cloak, my bark hat, and the melancholy trot of my steed cause the people to take me in the dark for a pedlar or for a farmer's boy. One of my greatest amusements is to watch the transition of night into day; that takes place in a thousand various ways. That *revolution*, so uniform in appearance, possesses a different character every day.

Did you ever have the leisure to observe it? I suppose not. Do you work? You enlighten your mind. You do not rest satisfied with vegetating like a plant. Go on, live and love me. Do not start without writing to me. May the winds be favourable to you, and your sky serene. Everything is propitious to lovers. They are the spoilt children of Providence. They enjoy everything, while their friends are ever anxious. I warn you that I shall often feel uneasy about you if you forget me.

I will prepare a nice room for you in *my house*.

I am writing a sequel to *Lélia*. I am more taken up with it than I ever was with any other novel. *Lélia* is not I. I am

a better fellow than that; but it is my ideal. I thus conceive my muse, if I may be permitted to have a muse.

Good-bye, good-bye! the day is breaking, and I still within doors! *Per la scala del balcone, presto andiamo via di qua.\* . . .*

*To MADAME MARLIANI, Paris.*

LA CHATRE, 28th June, 1836.

MY FRIEND,

In order to please you, I wrote, not to the abbé,† he has too positively forbidden each and all to ever introduce any one to him, even the Pope himself, but to my friend Didier, who will take upon himself to enable you to form the acquaintance of the abbé, by appointing an interview some day, in the Rue du Regard. He will call upon you for that purpose, and let you know what time you can meet with the good abbé at his house and on a favourable day.

Though always affable and modest, he sometimes feels quite disturbed and uneasy when a letter of introduction is handed to him. He has all the simple timidity of genius. If you find him chatting quietly with his friends of the Rue du Regard, where he spends the best part of his time, you will know him better, and the pleasure he will have in making your acquaintance will not be marred by any drawback.


Didier is, for the present, in Geneva, though only for a few days. As soon as he is back in Paris he will call on you. I sent him your address.

You are very kind to let me hear from you, and to disclose

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\* By the balcony steps, let us quickly depart.

† The Abbé Lamennais.



your troubles to me. I hope things will not turn out as bad as you seem to fear. You are strong, be also hopeful, that is one of the aspects of courage. Whatever happens, you will always find me full of solicitude and devotion for you; you do not doubt it, I hope.

My suit is still *pending* before the Court at Bourges. I am waiting for the decisive ordeal, and trust that I shall still come out of it as well as I did with the two others. Pray for me, you who are a kind and noble soul, dear to God, without doubt.

That is precisely why I cannot imagine that He ever will abandon you to real misfortune.

Farewell; love me always, your affection is sweet and precious to me. Let me sometimes hear from you, and please shake your husband's hand on behalf of your common friend.

GEORGE.

*To THE COUNTESS D'AGOULT, Geneva.*

LA CHATRE, 10th July, 1836.

Alas! my friend, I have not as yet pleaded before the royal court; therefore I have neither won nor lost. Those who informed you of my victory doubtless referred to the last decision. My case will only be heard on the 25th of July. If you should be in Geneva on the 1st of August you will know my fate, and perhaps you will know it from myself if I am then sure to find you there. But I dare not expect it. I, however, dream of my oasis beside Franz and yourself. Having crossed so many sands, having braved so many storms, I am now longing after the pure water-spring and

the shadows of the two beautiful palm-trees of the desert. Shall I find them? If you should not be at Geneva, I shall not go there. I will go to Paris, there to see the Abbé de Lamennais and two or three real friends, whom, among a thousand *superficial* friendships, I reckon in the "modern Babylon."

Did you, to speak like Obermann, watch the moon issuing over the Vélan? How happy you are, dear children, to be in Switzerland, so as to observe all the wonders of nature! That is what I should want in order to rewrite two or three chapters of *Lélia*, for I am writing *Lélia* anew; have you been told of it? The poison which made me ill is now the remedy that cures me. That book had plunged me into scepticism, now it helps me out of it; for you know that the disease makes the book, that the latter causes the malady to grow worse, and so with the cure. At first sight it does not seem very easy to maintain plasticity, and to cause the production of wrath to harmonise with that of mansuetude. Still, given the characters, you will understand if you recollect them, that wisdom is the character of Trenmor, and divine love that of *Lélia*. The narrow-minded and fanatical priest, the courtesan, and the weak and vain young man will be sacrificed, each and all, to *morality*; not to greengrocers' morality, nor to that of our drawing-rooms, my friend (of which I am sure you are not the dupe), but to a morality which I should like to cut after your own pattern, and you are aware that, in that respect, I aspire to a certain relationship to you.

To rush into the bosom of Mother Nature; to regard her really as a *mother* and as a *sister*; to stoically and religiously eliminate from life all satisfied vanity; to obstinately resist the proud and the wicked; to be humble and meek with the



unfortunate ; to weep over the poor man's misery and wish for no other consolation but the fall of the rich ; to believe in no other God but he who preaches justice and equality to men ; to venerate what is *good* ; to judge with severity that which is but *strong* ; to live on almost nothing, to give almost everything, in order to set up again primitive equality and to revive divine institutions—such is the religion which I would proclaim in my humble retreat, and which I aspire to preach to my twelve apostles under the lime-trees of my garden.

As for love, it will be dwelt upon separately in another book. *Lélia* will express herself in that respect in a general way and pretty concisely, and will be in the rank of exceptions. She belongs to the family of the Essenes, and is the companion of the palm-tree, *gens solitaria*, of which Pliny speaks. That fine passage will be the epigraph of my third volume ; it is that of the autumn of my life. Do you approve the plan of my book ? As for the plan of life, you are not competent, you are too young and too happy to go to the salubrious shores of the *Dead Sea* (still according to Pliny the younger) and to enter that family *no member of which ever was born or ever dies*, etc.

If I find you in Geneva, I will read to you what I have done, and you will help me to rewrite my descriptions of sunrise ; for you witnessed them in your mountains, shining a hundred times more brilliantly than I ever saw mine in my little valley. What you tell me about Franz gives me a truly furious and morbid desire to hear him. You know that I sit under the piano whenever he plays it. My fibre is very strong, and I never met with an instrument powerful enough. At any rate, Franz is the only artist in

the world that knows how to impart life and soul to a piano. I heard Thalberg\* in Paris. He appeared to me like a gentle little boy, very nice and good. At times, Franz amuses himself by playing a few notes like Thalberg, afterwards letting loose the furious elements upon that little breeze.

Wait for me, for God's sake! I dare not, however, beg you to do so, for Italy is better than I. I am a poor personage to put in the scale against Rome and the sun. I have some hope that the excessive heat will frighten you, and that you will wait for the autumn.

Do not those dog-days overpower you? Perhaps the life you lead does not often expose you to their fierceness. As for me, I have not the sense to preserve myself from it. I start on foot at three in the morning, with the firm intent of returning at eight; but I lose myself in the dales, I forget myself on brooksides, I run after insects, and only reach home about midday in a state of torrefaction impossible to describe.

The other day, I was so overcome that I entered the river with all my clothes on. I had not foreseen that bath, so that I had no dress *ad hoc*. I came out wringing wet from head to foot. A little farther on, my clothes having already dried, being again drenched with perspiration, I again plunged into the Indre. My only precaution was to fix my dress to a bush and to bathe with my *peignoir*. I afterwards put on my dress over it, and the rare passers-by did not notice my strange *draperies*. By taking three or four baths at each walk, I still manage three or four leagues (nine or twelve miles) on foot, with thirty degrees of heat,\* and what

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\* Thalberg, a celebrated pianist.

\* Centigrade (about seventy-six degrees Fahrenheit).

leagues! Not a beetle passes but I run after it. Sometimes, on leaving the river, I lie on the grass of some meadow with my wet clothes on, and indulge in a siesta. Lovely season, which enables us to enjoy all the comforts of primitive life!

You cannot imagine all I dream of in my strolls out in the sun. I fancy myself living in the grand days of Greece. In the happy part which I inhabit, you may often walk two leagues without meeting a single human being. The flocks alone people the pastures, which are well enclosed by magnificently luxurious hedges. The illusion may therefore last a long time. When strolling far away through paths with which I am unacquainted, one of my greatest amusements is to imagine that I am exploring some other country with which I find an analogy. I recollect having during whole hours fancied I was wandering through the Alps or in some part of America. I now fancy that Arcadia is in Berry. There is not a meadow, not a cluster of trees which, with a lovely and bright sun, does not appear wholly Arcadian to me.

I teach you all the secrets of my happiness. Should you some day be *alone* (which I do not wish or believe for you), you will remember my *Essenian* walks. You will perhaps think that it is better to indulge in such amusement than in blowing out one's brains, as I was often tempted to do when I entered the *desert*. Do you possess any physical strength? That is a great point.

In spite of all this, I sometimes have fits of melancholy; do not doubt it; but I resist and pray. There is a way to pray. Praying is an important and difficult thing. It is the end of moral man. You cannot pray yourself. I defy you to do it, and if you were to pretend that you could I should

not believe you. But I have only ascended the first, the weakest, the most imperfect and wretched step of Jacob's ladder. That is why (I seldom pray, and but very badly. Yet however few and poor my prayers, I experience a foretaste of infinite ecstasies and raptures, similar to those of my youth, when I used to believe that I saw the Virgin, like a white spot on a sun which moved about me.) Now my visions are all about stars; but I begin to have strange dreams.

By-the-bye, do you know the names of all the stars of our hemisphere? You ought to learn astronomy, in order to explain to me lots of things which I am unable to transfer from our sphere to the canopy of immensity. I would wager that you know it to perfection, or that, if you wished, you would know it in a week.

I am distressed at the want of knowledge I discover in myself respecting many things, but chiefly those I am dying to learn. I succeeded in instructing myself in the celestial chart without consulting the globe. But, when I cast my eyes upon the miserable painted ball and endeavour to grasp the great mechanism of the universe, I am completely lost. I only know the names of stars and constellations. That alone is a very good thing in a poetical sense.

By comparison, we learn to appreciate the beauty of stars. No star is like another when we consider it attentively. I never suspected that before this summer. If you wish to ascertain it you need only observe Antares in the south, from nine to ten at night, and compare it with Arcturus, which you already know. Compare also Vega, so white, so steady, all through the night, with the Goat, which breaks forth in the sky about midnight, red, scintillating, almost *burning*. Talking about Antares, which is the heart of the Scorpion, I would

draw your attention to the graceful bend of that constellation; it is enough to move you to adoration. If your sight be good, you should also notice the whiteness of the Pleiades,\* and how delicate their little cluster appears at daybreak and precisely at the very breaking of dawn. You know all about that; but perhaps for a long time have not paid any special attention to it. I wish to add one more pleasure to your happy life. You see that I am not niggardly with my discoveries. That is because God is the master of my treasures.

Always write to me to the La Châtre post-office, "to be called for." Your letters will be sent on to me at Bourges. Alas! I am going to leave the starry nights and the meadows of Arcadia. Pity me and love me. I kiss you both cordially, and respectfully greet the illustrious Doctor *Ratissimo*.

You have drawn a portrait of yourself which was not needed. With regard to the excess of diffidence contained in it, I am better able than yourself to form an opinion. As for its truthfulness, am I not acquainted with your life, without its ever having been related to me? Does not the end explain antecedents? Yes, you are a great soul, your character is noble and your *heart good*; the latter is more important than all the rest, it is the rarest of virtues, although everybody pretends to it.

The older I grow, the more I bow to kindness, because it occurs to me that, of all His gifts, a kind heart is that of which God is most sparing. Wherever the intellect is

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\* An English poet has referred to this appearance of this constellation in a charming line :

"Though high o'er head the *frozen* Pleiades shine."

TRANSLATOR.

deficient, what we call kindness is simply ineptia ; it becomes apathy wherever might is wanting. Wherever might and enlightenment are united, kindness is scarcely to be found ; because experience and observation give rise to mistrust and hatred. Minds impelled by the noblest principles are often the most hardened and acrimonious, because they have been soured by deception. They still excite our regard and admiration, but no longer our affection. To have suffered, without ceasing to be kind and intelligent, supposes a powerful organisation, such as I delight to find and greet.

I am sick and tired (excuse the expression) of great men. I should like to see them all in Plutarch. Those who are there do not grieve me from a human standpoint. Let great men be carved in marble or cast in bronze, and no more said about them. So long as they live, they are wicked, persecuting, whimsical, despotic, bitter, and diffident. They regard both rams and ewes with the same haughty contempt. They are worse to their friends than to their enemies. May God deliver us from them ! Remain kind, even *stupid* if you like. Franz can tell you that the people I love are never too simple to please me. How often have I reproached him with being too witty ! Happily that is but little, and I can love him much.

Farewell, dear ; write to me. May you not start yet ! The weather is too hot. Be sure you will suffer from it. There is no travelling at night in Italy. If you should cross the Simplon (it is indeed the finest sight in the world), you will have to do it on foot in order to climb and see all to advantage. The trouble of it will kill you !

I wish I could find I know not what scarecrow so as to delay you.

To *MADemoiselle LEROYER DE CHANTEPIE, Angers.*

NOHANT, 21st August, 1836.

MISS,

There is for me but one creed and one refuge: faith in God and our own immortality. My secret is not new, but there is no other.

Love is a bad thing, or at least a dangerous trial. Glory is empty and matrimony hateful. Maternity procures ineffable delights; but, either through love or marriage, we must pay such a price for it that I would never advise anybody to incur the cost. When away from my children, whose education absorbs a great portion of my time, I seek for solitude, and, since I have given up many impossible dreams, I find in it consolations which I did not expect.

I will try to give them poetic expression in one of my works to which I am adding a volume, *Lélia*, that you have had the goodness to judge with indulgence, and which contains more of my own inward self than any other book. Since you think I know more of the science of life than yourself, I refer you to the forthcoming edition of that work.

But I much fear you are deceived when you attribute to me the power of curing you. You will find by yourself all I found, and you will find it better suited to your faculties. Hope! There are times of trials; but He who sends them takes care to alleviate them when the burden becomes too heavy. You seem to me to be one of His *selected vases*. You must, therefore, thank Him first for having caused you to be, you will afterwards learn from Him gradually His views about you, what He intends to do with you.

I wish I were one of those who pray to Him with ardour and are sure to see their prayers granted. I should ask for your happiness, or, at least, calm and resignation, which you seem to me created to understand and worthy to possess.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. CASIMIR DUDEVANT, Paris.*

PARIS, November, 1836 — —

I am much distressed at Maurice's condition. I do not tell him so, but I fear that he is suffering from some kind of consumptive disease. His sleep is light and frequently disturbed by dreams. That is not usual at his age. He feels no pain; but the two doctors who see him, that of his college and the medical man who comes here daily as a friend, both find the same symptoms of nervous excitement and disturbance at the heart.

I do not know how to manage my departure. My presence is required at Nohant; but, as soon as I talk about it, he is all in tears and becomes feverish. I lectured him so much, that he submits to all I require. He does not say anything; but he is upset. Come to my aid, I beseech you. Speak to him kindly and tenderly. The dear boy is equally fond of us both; but he is weak in mind and body. Severity overpowers and terrifies him.

Doctors recommend us to avoid crossing him; that is rather embarrassing. How can a child be brought up without being crossed sometimes? They say it is the fever of growth, but that under irritation it may develop into a more serious disease. At night his heart indeed appears more agitated.



than when those gentlemen examine him. I shudder at the idea of his being attacked by the disease from which I suffered all my life, and am still suffering. I wish his constitution were as good as mine! But it is not so. Grief is contrary to his nature.

I assure you that it was a great fault, I should even say a great crime, to acquaint that child with what he ought not to have known, or, at least, partly ignored and only vaguely understood. The harm is done, though neither you nor I wished it. As for me, I am conscious of having always endeavoured to induce him to divide his affection between us.

To-day it is no longer a question of our personal dissensions; it is that of our child's health: an interest which stands before everything else. Do not let us, for Heaven's sake! place him in a rivalry of affection which excites his already too pronounced sensitiveness. Since I encourage his tenderness for you, do likewise abstain from crossing his fondness for me. Come to see him here as often as you like. If my presence should be unpleasant to you, nothing is easier than to avoid it. As for me, I have no objection to meet you. The state in which I see Maurice deadens all other sentiments in me but the desire of calming and curing him both physically and morally.

I shall stay here until he has recruited his health, and will not take any step with regard to him unless approved by you. Help me; you love your son as much as I do. Spare him emotions which he is not strong enough to bear. Were I to speak ill of you to him that would do him harm. Let the precaution be reciprocal.

What interest could we now have in attacking each other through the heart of a poor child full of meekness and affec-

tion? That would be carrying the warfare too far, and, as for me, I do not understand it to that extent.

A. DUDEVANT.

Maurice entirely ignores my anxiety. He expects to go back to college from day to day. Do not speak to him about his palpitation of the heart. The doctor always says, in his presence, that it is nothing at all.

*To M. ADOLPHE GUÉROULT, Paris.*

NOHANT, 14th February, 1837.

MY DEAR COMRADE,

. . . You are certainly not deficient in talent; your article is bristling with it. But that is not the compliment you expect from me: you wish me to do justice to your opinions. In doing them justice I should only offend you.

Yes, my friend, *you are a rogue, an unmitigated rogue. Oh! my boy! I fail to recognise you in this!*

It is right that you should wish well to the Arabs; that you should be actuated by the desire of working for their liberty; that you should denounce the despotism of the Egyptians; that is taking the good side of things as regards the East. But, wretches (this applies to the Saint-Simonians more than to yourself), you abandon the cause of justice and truth in France, where it could be understood quicker than anywhere else, and where it will be, doubt not, by our children.

However little you might have achieved, people could have said that there existed a society conservative of the great principle of equality. A principle banished, hunted down,

detested, and persecuted throughout the world, but which has sought refuge within the hearts of a few honest men. Some day you might possibly have risen to be gods.

You were compelled to seek abroad for means of existence. It would be better to blow out one's brains than to obtain one's livelihood from an infamous Government, from a man who is the incarnate principle of oppression and demoralisation. To expatriate oneself is a weakness to begin with. You gave way to persecution. You blushed, not on account of your misery, which rendered you truly great, but on account of your powerlessness over public opinion, a defect which betrayed want of talent in the supreme direction of your sect.

You were wrong. However poor the language of your morality, since that morality was the only one and alone true, it might eventually have brought you the consideration you deserve. And, if that great undertaking had not some day been achieved in the names of Saint Simon and Enfantin, at least Saint Simon and Enfantin might both have occupied a great place in the history of morality by the side of that occupied by Lafayette in political history.

But all that is done for. You have fallen into a system of mysterious transaction which is no longer intelligible. You seem anxious to be forgotten in France, and to obtain forgiveness for the good you attempted to do. You talk about regenerating peoples that do not exist. In fact you live by the grace of Louis Philippe. As for yourself, you are now director of the *Débats*, neither more nor less than my friend Janin.

Hold your tongue, you humbug! you would do better to start as a cobbler and mend old boots. Observe what con-

cessions you are obliged to make in order to induce M. Bertin to swallow the exposition of your ideas respecting the despotism of Mahommed Ali !

In truth the middle party little minds the Liberals of the banks of the Nile, provided that, when paying them compliments, they bow very low before the *royal pear*. That is what you do.

You say : "In 1830 France gave the last touch to her system of liberty ; *human liberty, and private dignity were constituted in a manner indestructible in the future,*" etc. ! and a thousand other blasphemies which would cause Michel \* to swear like a madman, and which grieve me.

Certainly, if you argue like Thiers and Guizot ; if liberty is, in your opinion, compatible with monarchy ; if you admit human dignity, without equality ; if you call *abolition of social distinctions* the principle which squeezes in the heart of man, as in a vice, love of possession, egotism, complete forsaking of the poor, which raises to the rank of virtue *public order*, that is, the right of killing any one who begs for bread in loud tones, and in the name of the natural justice of hunger ; indeed, if you accept all this, your arguments are *logical* and I have not a word to say.

But if you still preserve the religion of the following fundamental principle of Saint-Simonism, *the law of equal distribution*, how can you make those concessions, even with good intentions, to a hateful state of things ? It is on the morrow of the execrable laws which bury all liberty, all human dignity for ten, perhaps for twenty years, that you utter this fine principle : *France is free, happy, honourable ;*

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\* Michel de Bourges.

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*there is nothing more to wish for her. Let us try to think of the Arabs, and make of them a people as honest as ourselves.*

Dear no ! leave them in their ignorance. Being slaves is no guilt on the part of those who do not possess the sentiment of human dignity. But it is strange to notice at what period of our political existence we, who pretend to have it, boast about it !

I shall certainly not alter your opinion, my friend. When we have made up our minds to say or write something, we have thought it over ; we believe ourselves to have well understood and pondered the question ; we are ready to consider as errors or dreams all that may be brought forward by our adversary. I, therefore, do not mention my reasons in order to correct you, but simply in order that we may understand each other, and both start from a well-known principle, in order to wrangle if we should feel so inclined. As for me, I tell you I only know and have ever known but one principle : that of the abolition of property.

Its advocacy of that principle has always caused me to venerate Saint-Simonism ; as that is also the reason why I worship certain *true* Republicans (there are few, believe me). If I am neither a Saint-Simonian nor a Republican (I will, for the time being, assume that I am a man), it is that I do not perceive a formula worthy of rallying men, or a circumstance capable of developing good sentiments through actions. The present time is not favourable for ordinary men like *Enfantin*, yourself, and me. I mean ordinary so far as intellect goes, for I do not question the high morality of *Enfantin* (I do not know anything about it, and am happy to believe in it).

The question was therefore to wait for leaders, for a plan

of battle, a flag, and an army bent upon fighting. Failing all these, there is nothing to do but to preserve, within oneself, the good principle, pure and spotless, without the shadow of a concession to *metaphysical Jesuitism*, that affected morality in which no man believes.

A day will come when that good principle will have its turn. If we should no longer be in this world, our children and descendants, having received it from us, will speak and do something. You speak of two hundred copies of my portrait being distributed to your *prolétaires*. Have you then two hundred of the latter? You had always spoken of about fifty at the most. I wish to put a few questions to you respecting your Saint-Simonians. What is their belief? What is their opinion? What is their wish?

As far as I could judge by Vinçard, they are rose-water Republicans, honest men, but far too meek, too evangelical, and too patient. The elements of the future ought to be a race of *prolétaires*, wild, proud, and ready to reclaim by force all the rights of mankind.

But where is that race? Men are being seduced on the one hand by an appearance of welfare, on the other by maxims of pretended civilisation, of which they will be the dupes. Poor people!

If you should see Vinçard, tell him I hope to dine with him when I next come to Paris. It is true I do not know when that will be. I still expect to see you about the middle of November. Keep a few copies of my portrait for me. I will subscribe for about twenty. Send one in a letter that I may see how it looks on paper.

Tell me what has become of Buloz. Has he at last become the husband of a young and handsome girl? The settlement

of his marriage is most important for my affairs. Reply to me. Farewell, dear friend ; remember me to kind Madame Mathieu, as also to your lovely sister.

Yours in heart.

To M. JULES JANIN.

NOHANT, 15th February, 1837.

You are very good, my dear comrade, to have replied so quickly and so conscientiously. I thank you for your excellent disposition towards Calamatta. I had already sent my bad *feuilleton* to the *Monde* \* when your letter came, and I can neither get it back nor begin another, for I am stupid at that sort of work.

I am quite incapable of writing for the *Débats*. I do not speak of opinions which are sacred, even for a woman, but only of the way of treating the literary question. Bear in mind that I do not possess the shadow of wit, that I am heavy, prolix, emphatic, and have none of the qualities of journalism. What I am now writing for the *Monde* would not suit the *Débats*, and, as regards ideas, might perhaps not be admitted into the latter sheet.

How, my friend, could I seek the columns of a newspaper in which you write, and venture into a field where you reign without dispute? I will never pose as the rival of anybody whatever. I have too much indolence for that, and to compete against a sovereign is still less to my taste. I do not feel strong enough to contend against established glory. Who knows but that glory which I hail with so much pleasure and

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\* A newspaper edited by the Abbé de Lamennais.

affection, will not become hateful to me whenever it overtowers me?

No, indeed. I am much happier as I am. Leave me in my own little corner. Besides, I declare to you, upon my honour, that I have not the least ambition for either money or reputation. I have produced all I could produce, and only aspire to rest myself and to hang up my pen by the side of my Turkish pipe.

I do not write in the *Monde*; I am not the partner of anybody. Partner of the Abbé de Lamennais is a title and an honour which would not suit me. I am his faithful servant. He is so kind and I love him so much that I will give him as much of my blood and ink as he may ask for. But he will hardly ask, for he does not want me, thank God! I have not the presumption to believe that I can be of any other service to him than to bring a few more subscribers to his paper, through my chatter. His journal may last as long as it will and pay me as it may please. It matters little to me. The Abbé de Lamennais will always be the Abbé de Lamennais, and no possible councils or associations can make anything but a very poor devil of George.

I do not doubt either the kindness or the generosity of M. Bertin; but there is no reason why I should, without any right, claim his lively interest in me. My kind of work would not suit him, and now that my hair is getting hoary, my head is too hard to acquire grace, concision, and all that pleases the public.

Believe me, we must each remain within our own sphere. *It is ambition that ruins men. Do not let us overtask our talent. We must do in public only that which we do positively well, etc., etc. Vide Sancho Panza and the thirty thousand*



All my wishes relate, therefore, for the present to one single object : to sell my past labour in order not to have any future labour to confront. You do not imagine, friend, the loathing with which literature (that is, my own) now inspires me. ( I am passionately fond of the country ; I have, like yourself, all household tastes, home tastes ; I love dogs, cats, and children above all things. / I am no longer young. I want to sleep all night long and to idle about all day. Help me to get out of the claws of Buloz, and I will bless you all the days of my life. I will write manuscripts wherewith to light your pipe, and will rear harriers and Persian cats for you. If you will give me your little daughter to wean, I will return her nice-looking, in good health, and as wicked as the devil, for I will completely spoil her.

You ought to understand all that, you who are so simple, so good, so little of a great man in your ways, so different from the ways of criticism. You have submitted to your success more than you have sought for it. It has been a great success ; but, had it only been ordinary you would have been satisfied with it, in accordance with that amiable *insouciance* which I so much admire. Do you know what I prize above all things in this world ? Kindness and simplicity. My ambition now is to become a *good fellow* ; it is not an easy thing and a very rare one.

Thanks for your kind advice and for the interest which you so warmly display towards me. I wish I were worthy of your zeal, but I am sure I possess gratitude enough to acknowledge your friendship.

*To M. L'ABBÉ DE LAMENNAIS.*

NOHANT, 28th February, 1837.

SIR AND EXCELLENT FRIEND,

You carried me, without being aware of it, on to ground where I find it difficult to stand. When I began those *Lettres à Marcie*, I did not contemplate limiting myself to so serious a frame as that into which I now find myself driven, in spite of myself, by the irrepressible impulse of my reflections. It frightens me; for, during the few hours it has been my good fortune to spend in listening to you, with the respect and veneration with which my heart is filled towards you, it never occurred to me to ask for the result of your examination respecting the questions with which I am dealing to-day.

I do not even know whether the present condition of women has attracted your notice, in the midst of so many religious and political preoccupations with which your intellectual life has been taken up. What is most strange with regard to this is that, though I have written all my life upon that subject, I yet scarcely know what to think about it. Having never summed up my opinions, having only vaguely expressed my ideas, it now happens that I conclude by inspiration, without being aware whence that inspiration comes, without knowing in the least whether I make a mistake or not, without being able to debar myself from concluding as I do and finding within myself I know not what conviction, which is, perhaps, the voice of truth or the impertinent dictate of pride.

But I am in full swing, and experience the desire of extending the scope of the *Lettres à Marcie* so long as I can introduce therein questions relating to women. I should like to

speaking upon all womanly duties : marriage, maternity, etc. On several points I fear being carried by my natural petulance farther than you would allow me to go, if I could consult you beforehand. But have I the time to ask you, at each page, to trace the road for me? Can you afford the time to make up for my ignorance? No, the paper is being printed. I am overwhelmed by many other cares, and when at night I find an hour to think about *Marcie*, I must write and not think.

After all, I am perhaps not capable of thinking any more of anything whatever, and every time (I should rather say the few times) I have had a good idea it has dropped from the clouds at a moment when I least expected it. What am I to do? Shall I follow my impulse, or shall I request you to examine the bad sheets I send to the paper? The latter presents many disadvantages; a production corrected by any other person than the author himself is always deficient in unity. It loses its *ensemble*, its general logic. Often, when repairing the corner of a wall, you bring down a whole house, which, had you not touched the wall, might have still been standing.

To obviate all such disadvantages, I think we ought to agree upon the following points: I will here confess to you the main broad ideas which pass through my mind, and you will authorise me to write freely, without troubling yourself too much about my making some blunders in the details. I do not know very well to what extent men of the world would hold you responsible for it; and besides, I believe that you little heed men of the world. But I feel for you such deep affection, I feel myself recommended by such confidence, that even were I certain not to be wrong, I should still give way, in order to deserve a shake of the hand from you.

To sum up my bold ideas, they consist in claiming divorce in marriage. For me, the only remedy to the mortal injustices, to the endless miseries, to the often incurable passions which disturb the union of the sexes, is the liberty of breaking up conjugal ties and forming them again. It is not my opinion that divorce should be resorted to lightly, and without motives as serious as those required for obtaining the legal separation now in force.

Although, for my part, I should prefer to spend the rest of my life in a dungeon rather than marry again, I know of instances of such durable, such imperative affection, that I do not see in the old civil and religious law any provision likely to oppose a durable and solid check to it. And we must always remember that affection becomes stronger and worthier of interest as human intellect raises and purifies itself.

It is certain that, in the past, it could not be checked, and that it disturbed social order. So long as that disorder was provoked by vice and corruption, it never furnished weapons against the law. But strong minds, great and noble characters, hearts full of faith and benevolence, have been dominated by passions which seemed to descend from heaven itself. What can we say in answer to that? And how can we write about women without debating a question which they regard as paramount, and which occupies the first place in their lives?

Believe me, I know this better than you; and therefore let the disciple dare only once to say:

"Master, there are paths therein which you have never trod, abysses which my eye has fathomed. You have lived with the angels; I with men and women. I know how people suffer, how they sin, how much they need a rule to enable them to be virtuous."

Trust in me. Than I, nobody is more anxious to find that rule, with more respect towards virtue, with less personality ; for I shall never try to palliate the faults of my past, and my age permits me to calmly consider the storms that vanish and cease on my horizon.

Send me a word of reply. If you forbid me to go ahead I will terminate the *Lettres à Marcie* as they now stand, and do anything else you may order me to do. I can keep silent on many points, and do not believe myself called upon to renovate the world.

Farewell, father and friend, nobody loves and respects you more than I.

G. SAND.

*To M. CALAMATTA, Paris.*

NOHANT, 12th July, 1837.

CARISSIMO,

It is I who behaved towards you like a regular clown. You are so kind that you will forgive all, but I do not forgive myself any of the wrongs I may have done you, whom I love and esteem with all my soul.

This is rather late to congratulate you upon your *fortune* ; but you know how I share it, my good old man, and how much more agreeable it is to me than if anything similar had occurred to me personally. It was high time you should be rewarded by a little well-being for so laborious and stoical a life. That is the first time those people have done anything fitly.

The only bad point in it in my opinion is, that all those journeys and labours will prevent your coming to see me.

Provided you be satisfied and justice be done to you, I will sacrifice my joy to yours. I am much moved by the gratitude for which M. Ingres believes himself indebted to me. I only obeyed the dictates of truth by placing him foremost among artists and praising his magnificent work. Since my feeble homage reached him, I do not refuse his thanks; on the contrary, I accept them with a great feeling of pride and joy.

I received your tobacco, which is very good, and advise you not to scorn the sublime profession of *smuggler*, in which you have started so pleasantly. Do not, however, incur *adesso* a considerable fine. You know that two things are to be feared in life, *l'indifferenza d'un ministra e l'ira d'un doganiere* : \* that is a Venetian proverb. You escaped the first, take care of the second.

By-the-bye, *Calamajo benedetto*,† if you are not doing anything more with my portrait, could you not send it to me? That would give me great pleasure. I have spoken about it, and everybody wishes to see it.

You had treated me better than you did Madame d'Agoult; you saw me with your heart's eyes, and her with reason's. You have painted her a little older and made her appear more serious than she really is, even when she is serious. In other respects hers is an admirable portrait. The hair seems inimitable; you have painted it as beautiful as it is in nature. That grave and noble head is worthy of Van Dyck. But, as regards resemblance, Franz's portrait is more strikingly complete. Maurice's still causes universal admiration and my delight.

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\* The indifference of a Minister and the anger of a Doge.

† My blessed Calamajo (a term of endearment for Calamatta).

I received the drawings, and I pray you to thank *Signor Nino* for them. They did not come handy for what I was doing then; but they will serve me for what I am doing now, for I cannot keep away from my dear Venice.

Read *Les Maîtres Mosaïstes*, in the forthcoming number of the *Revue*. It is not much; but I thought of you when penning Valerio's character. I also thought of your fraternity with Mercuri. In fact my opinion is that that *bluette* will rouse in you some of our sympathies and holy illusions of youth.

Good night, my great artist. Whatever be my ignoble laziness, let me often hear how you are getting on. Love me always from the bottom of your heart, as I do myself.

Yours,

GEORGE.

*To GUSTAVE PAPET, Ars (Indre).*

FONTAINEBLEAU, 24th August, 1837.

DEAR OLD FELLOW,

I have lost my dear mother! Hers was the calmest and sweetest of deaths. She died without a struggle, unconscious that her end was near, and believing she was simply going to sleep to wake up shortly after. You know that she was always neat and coquettish (smart). Her last sentence was: "Brush up my hair."

Poor little woman! Shrewd, intelligent, artistic, generous, passionately impulsive in little things and good in great ones. She was the cause of much suffering for me, and my greatest evils were brought about by her. But she had greatly atoned for them of late, and I had the satisfaction to see that she

at last understood my character and rendered me complete justice. I am conscious of having done for her all that it was my duty to do.

I may well say that I am no longer with a family. Heaven has compensated me for it by giving me such friends as nobody perhaps ever was blessed with. It is the only real and complete happiness of my life. People pretend that some of my friends are false and ungrateful. As for me, I deny it, for my true friends have afforded me so much consolation and compensation for the wrongs the others have done me, that I have forgotten the latter.

I am delighted to have Maurice with me. I went to meet him at Fontainebleau, where we are snugly settled in a small inn overlooking the forest. We ride daily on horses or donkeys, bathe, and catch butterflies. I am not sorry that I should have some holidays. When the funds are exhausted (which must be soon), and I have finished my business in Paris, where I shall go and spend three days, we shall start for home. Write to me here. Kiss your father for me, and always love your old mother, your old sister, and your old comrade. Maurice kisses you a thousand times.

GEORGE —

*TO THE COUNTESS D'AGOULT, Geneva.*

FONTAINEBLEAU, 25th August, 1837-

DEAR PRINCESS,

This is a note entrusted to the hazard of the post. I am confident that it will not reach you, for most of our letters miscarry at the frontier. I have only to-day, the 25th, received your letter here, where I am concealed in tête-à-tête with Maurice, away from idlers and wags.



I wrote to you to Geneva, and hope that, before starting for Milan, you received the letter. I was telling you that I was deeply affected—my poor mother's death was agonising to me. I spent several days in Paris in order to attend to her last moments. In the meantime I had a false alarm, and sent Mallefille with the mail-coach to Nohant, in order to fetch my son, who was said to have been carried off. Whilst I went to receive him at Fontainebleau, my mother quietly expired, without a struggle. The next morning I found her stiff in bed, and, when embracing her corpse, I felt that what they say about the power of blood-relationship and the voice of nature is not a dream, as I often thought it was in my days of ill-humour.

I have returned to Fontainebleau, broken up with fatigue and overwhelmed with a grief in which I did not believe two months ago. Truly the heart is an inexhaustible mine of sufferings!

My poor mother is no more! She is resting in the sun, under beautiful flowers, over which the butterflies flutter, heedless of death. I was so struck by the gaiety of that grave in the Montmartre cemetery, in magnificent weather, that I was wondering why my tears should flow so abundantly. We truly know nothing of death's mystery! Why should we weep, and yet how are we to refrain from doing so? All those instinctive emotions, whose cause lies beyond our will and reason, must doubtless have a meaning—what?

Maurice is much pleased with his stay here. We ride daily on horseback, and collect flowers and butterflies in the solitudes of the forest. The latter is really a delightful place, a regular little Switzerland, which the Parisians do not suspect, and whose great advantage is that it attracts but few visitors.

I am quite *incognita* here, passing under an assumed name and working hard.

Farewell, dear; let us hope that the railways will prosper, so that we may go for an excursion to the *Isola Madre*, provided we can dispose of a week's leisure and a little money. Time and money! The former because of the latter—money because of the time. What drawbacks! And the time for being happy, and the means of being so, where are they to be obtained? In the Lake Major?

Write to me, friend; let me hear about yourself, and love me as I do you.

*To MAJOR ADOLPHE PICTET, Geneva.*

PARIS, October, 1838.

DEAR MAJOR,

Your story\* is a little masterpiece: I do not know whether it is that nowhere else have I found myself so sharply and so affectionately rated, but it seems to me that nowhere else have I been appreciated with so much wisdom or so charmingly praised.

Hoffmann himself would not have disowned the poetical part of your story, and as for its philosophical bearings, he could never have risen so high with so much lucidity and true eloquence. I assure you that no praise ever caused me any pleasure in my life. That was not because of my modesty (for, thanks to you, I have just perceived that I am much devoid of it), but because of that praise being always either fulsome or abominably stupid. For the first time I breathe

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\* *Une Course à Chamounix*, by Major Pictet.

that incense to which the gods themselves are said not to be indifferent.

I believe in the good there is in me, because you point it out to me paternally, as it were; as for my absurdity, it amuses and delights me to the utmost, because, in your production, I see what I vainly sought for in the world: benevolence, justice, reason, and kindness, walking hand in hand.

Believe me, dear major, I was not by nature so foolish as I became by reaction. Had I met, in my youth, with friends at the same time enlightened and affectionate, I might have done some good; but I only met with foolish or indifferent persons, and naturally preferred the former. I know that in my place you would have done the same, provided you ever could have been, even on the day of your birth, as ignorant and credulous as I was at twenty years of age!

I was especially struck by the philosophical remarks which wind up your story. The fifth, ninth, nineteenth, twenty-fifth, twenty-ninth, and the last remain and will remain impressed upon my mind as did, in my childhood, certain verses of the Bible or certain maxims of the sages of old. They are all the more welcome that they arrive at a time when I am better disposed to heed them. I am a little older than two years ago, and think I am on the point, or have *the will of reconciling myself with that which is dissimilar to me.*

I do not believe that the nature of my mind will ever induce me to take sufficiently to philosophy to assume any initiative whatever. Yet I shall, perhaps, succeed in understanding several things with which I was unacquainted. Provided I be not compelled to work, I am willing to make all sorts of progress. I shall always be wanting the blowpipe

of analysis; but if, instead of dissolving my crystal, the blow-pipe directs its flame so as to light my crystal, the latter will always be able to reflect that light like any other.

That, unfortunately, is of no service outside the intellectual world, and, owing to the fatality of "bumps," the *mountain* of imagination, by its *anteriority of occupation*, always towers above the *hillocks* which reason endeavours to raise around it; I, therefore, run the risk of acquiring only the dose of practical common sense sufficient to enable me to understand that I do not possess any common sense at all; but is not that even something?

Were that only to help to preserve me from the self-assertion which dries up the hearts of my poet *confrères*, and to understand the friendly remonstrances of generous minds! That, alone, would be a great blessing, would be one sense the more, one torture the less. I would scarcely boast of not being somewhat tortured by vanity, and I congratulate myself upon not having a heart of *crystal* and mere *pasteboard* friends. You do not believe this to be the case either, do you, dear major? and your blowpipe never pointed out to you any affectation of sentiment in me? What I admire is that you should know all that I know, whereas I shall never be able to obtain more than a glance of that which I clearly perceive.

Thought is therefore much superior to sentiment, since it possesses it, and is not possessed by it. It is fine! but I console myself with being at a distance; for, from within my own sphere, I contemplate your star and dream of its marvels without detecting any spot on it. You who, thanks to the glass, can inspect it as you would your home, may perhaps detect therein ravines, precipices, and volcanoes, which perchance spoil it, or at least impede your progress. It is the

same with music : it procures me infinite delight, which, were I a musician, would I believe be much diminished by the labour of close application to that science.

Farewell, good major ; I will again write to you upon that subject, for I have still much to tell you about *myself* ; and, since you are so kindly disposed, I will not finish *Lélia* \* without requesting many particulars from you. I do not know whether my handwriting is legible, even for a man accustomed to Sanscrit.

Farewell again and a thousand thanks. It will be very good of you to let me hear from you here—7, *Rue Grange-Batelière*, where I shall stay another fortnight, and it is possible, and even probable, that we shall go to spend the summer in Switzerland. My son's health is better, but the doctors recommend a cool climate for him in the summer and a warm one in the winter. We shall soon therefore be in Geneva and afterwards in Naples. Tell me in what part of your mountains, really wild and picturesque, I could go and work ; I desire a temperate climate for Maurice, and, for myself, peasants speaking French. The environs of Geneva do not seem to me *energetic* enough in their scenery, and I am anxious to avoid the *English*, the people who come to drink the waters, tourists, etc. etc. I am always anxious to live cheaply, for I have gained two law-suits, and thus am ruined.

Your book was brought to me by an unknown person, whom I did not see. I was in bed with a feverish cold, just like *Princess Uranis*. I do not know whether the bearer was merely a messenger or a friend of yours. I sent him word to call again, but I have heard nothing more of him.

Truly yours.

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\* A new and enlarged edition of *Lélia*, published in 1839.

*To M. FRANCOIS ROLLINAT, Châteauroux.*

MARSEILLES, 8th March, 1839.

DEAR PYLADES,

Here I am back in France, after the most unfortunate travelling experience imaginable. At the cost of a thousand troubles and at heavy expense we had succeeded in settling down at Majorca, a magnificent place, but inhospitable to the utmost degree. At the end of a month, poor Chopin, who had always been coughing from the time we left Paris, fell more seriously ill, so that we had to call in one, two, three doctors, each more asinine than the others, who went about the island saying that the patient was in the last stage of consumption. This caused great consternation, phthisis being extremely rare in those latitudes, and, moreover, considered contagious! Added to this were the egotism, the cowardice, the want of feeling, and the bad faith of the inhabitants. We were looked upon as being pestiferous, and, worse, as heathens, for we did not attend mass. The landlord of the little cottage that we had hired ejected us brutally, and wanted to bring an action against us in order to compel us to whitewash his house, which he pretended was infected. Had he succeeded, the native jurisprudence would have completely skinned us!

We had to submit to expulsion, contumely, and extortion. Not knowing what to do, for Chopin's state of health did not allow of his being taken back to France, we were delighted to meet in an old Carthusian convent a Spanish family whom political reasons had compelled to seek a hiding-place there, and who possessed a tolerably decent suite of peasant furniture. The refugees intended to pass over to France;

we, therefore, bought the furniture for three times its value, and installed ourselves in the convent of Valdemosa: a poetical name, a poetical abode—charming scenery, grand and wild, with the sea bordering on the horizon, formidable heights around us, eagles pursuing their prey even into the orange groves of our garden, a path planted with cypresses and winding its way from the top of the mountain to the bottom of the ravine; under our feet torrents, overhung by myrtles and palms. Nothing could be more magnificent.

But he was right who laid it down as a principle that whenever nature is gorgeous and beautiful men are wicked and sordid. There we had all the trouble in the world to procure the commonest necessities of life, though the island produces them in profusion; thanks to the unparalleled bad faith and to the spirit of rapine in the peasantry, who charged us about ten times the value of our purchases, so that, under pain of starvation, we were entirely at their mercy. We were unable to procure servants, because we were not *Christians*; and besides, nobody cared to wait upon a consumptive person. We, nevertheless, were pretty comfortably lodged. The place was incomparably poetical. We scarcely ever met a soul; nothing disturbed our occupations. After waiting for two months, and having to pay a duty of 300 francs, Chopin at last obtained his piano, and the vaults of the convent cells were enlivened by its melody. Maurice visibly improved every day in health and strength; as for me, I used to perform the duties of a tutor seven hours a day, and a little more conscientiously than *Tempête* (poor dear girl, I *nevertheless* kiss her with all my heart). During one-half of the night I worked for myself. Chopin composed some of his masterpieces, and we were in hopes of swallowing our vexations by the aid of

these compensating influences. But, owing to the elevated position of the convent, the climate eventually became unbearable. We were living in the midst of clouds, and for fifty days we were unable to descend to the valley. The roads had been changed into torrents, and we could no longer see the sun.

All that would have seemed very well to me if poor Chopin could have endured it. It did not affect Maurice. While battering our rocks the wind and the sea sang in a sublime tone. The immense and deserted cloisters were cracking overhead. Had I written there that part of *Lélia* which is enacted in a monastery I could have made it better and more real. But my poor friend's chest was daily growing worse. Fine weather did not return. A chambermaid whom I had brought with me from France, and who until then had resigned herself, thanks to a large salary, to do our cooking and keep our rooms tidy, was beginning to consider her work too fatiguing. The moment had arrived when, having wielded the broom and boiled the saucepan myself, I too must have given way to fatigue; for, besides my tutor's work, my literary pursuits, the continuous care demanded by the state of my patient, and the mortal anxiety he caused me, I was eaten up with rheumatism.

In Majorca the use of chimneys is unknown. By paying an exorbitant price we succeeded in getting somebody to build a grotesque stove for us, a sort of iron caldron which gave us the headache and parched our chests. In spite of that, the humidity of the convent was such that our clothing grew mouldy on our backs. Chopin grew worse daily, and in spite of all the offers of services which the people made us in the



*Spanish fashion*, we could not have found an hospitable house in the whole island. We at last decided to go away, at whatever cost, although Chopin had not even strength enough to drag himself along. We requested a simple, a first and last service—a conveyance to transport him to Palma, where we intended to embark. That service was refused, although our *friends* all had carriages and a suitable fortune. We were obliged to travel three leagues along outlandish paths in a *birlocho*, that is to say, a wheelbarrow !

Upon reaching Palma, Chopin had a dreadful fit of blood-spitting ; the next day we embarked on board the only steamboat in the island, and which is used for the transport of pigs to Barcelona. That was our only means of leaving the accursed country. We travelled in the company of a *hundred pigs*, whose ceaseless grunting and unbearable stench left neither rest nor respirable air for our patient. Chopin arrived at Barcelona still spitting blood by basins-full, and crawling along like a spectre. There, happily, our misfortunes began to diminish ! The French Consul and the Commander of the French Naval Station received us with an hospitality and a graciousness quite unknown in Spain. We were taken on board a beautiful brig belonging to the fleet. The surgeon, a brave and worthy man, at once came to the assistance of the patient, and in twenty-four hours stopped the hemorrhage of the lung.

From that time Chopin continued to improve. The Consul had us conveyed in his carriage to the hotel. There Chopin rested for a week, at the end of which the same steamboat that had brought us to Spain took us back again to France. As we were leaving our inn at Barcelona, the host wanted us to pay

for the bed in which Chopin had slept, under the pretence that it was infected and that the police had ordered him to burn it!

Spain is an odious nation! Barcelona is the refuge of all the wealthy, fine, and fashionable youth of the country. They come to conceal themselves there behind the fortifications of the town, which, indeed, are very strong, and, instead of serving their country, spend the days in disporting themselves along the promenades, rather than in repelling the Carlists who surround the town within cannon range, and extort ransoms from the rich, for their country seats. Trade here is paying taxes to Don Carlos as well as to the Queen. People here have no opinions, and do not possibly even suspect what a political conviction is. They are devout, that is, fanatical and bigoted, as in the times of the Holy Inquisition. Friendship, good faith, honour, devotion, sociableness here exist only in name. Oh! the wretches! how I hate and despise them!

We are at last at Marseilles. Chopin bore the sea passage very well. He is now, very weak, though infinitely better in all respects, and in the hands of Dr. Cauvière, an excellent man and an excellent doctor, who tends him like a father, and pledges himself for his recovery. We are at length breathing freely, but after what trouble and anguish!

I did not write all this to you before the end of it. I did not wish to sadden you; I was expecting better days. They have come at last. May God grant you a wholly calm and hopeful life! Dear friend, I should not like to learn that you have suffered as much as I during our absence.

Farewell. I clasp you to my bosom. My affectionate greetings to those of your people who love me, and to you good soul of a father.

Write to me here to the care of Dr. Cauvière, 71, Rue de Rome.

Chopin requests me to give you a hearty shake of the hand for him. Maurice and Solange kiss you. They are both in wonderful health. Maurice is quite cured.

*To MADAME MARLIANI, Paris.*

NOHANT, 3rd June, 1839.

Yes, dear friend, I am at home, truly delighted to be at last able to rest for once from that life of hotels and packings up, which I have dragged through along the highways and across the sea. We arrived here safely, and Maurice quite astonished the Berry folk by the change that had taken place in his appearance. He looks almost a man now, and I believe him to be now fully launched on the ocean of life. My poor children are so happy in the country that it truly delights me to see them.

By-the-bye, dear friend, what do you mean by efforts to be made and standard to be raised? My conviction is that neither men nor women are ripe enough to proclaim a new law. The only complete expression of the progress of our century is without doubt in the *Encyclopédie*. M. de Lamennais is a doughty champion, who struggles on in the meantime by means of grand sentiments and generous ideas, in order to open a path for that body of ideas which cannot yet be diffused, since it is not yet completely formulated. Before the disciples can preach, it is necessary that the masters should have completed their teaching. Otherwise, those scattered and undisciplined efforts could only retard the good results of the

doctrine. As for me, I cannot go quicker than those from whom I expect enlightenment. My conscience can even but slowly embrace their belief; for, much to my shame I confess, up to the present I have been scarcely anything but an *artiste*, and I am still, in many respects, and in spite of myself, but a big child.

Have patience, dear great soul. Calm your ardent spirit, or at least nourish it with hope and confidence. Better days will come. It is already a consolation to foresee them, and to have faith in their advent.

In the midst of all this, owing to the receipt of your letter, yesterday was for me but a day of tears. Gaubert's\* death does not affect me because of him. Like me, he firmly believed in an existence better than the present. He deserved and now possesses it. But I wept for my own sake over the long separation which has now taken place between us. It is so useful for the soul and so beneficial for the heart to live under the ægis of true friends! And he was one of the truest, one of those whom I most esteemed, and upon whom I could most rely. I shall meet him again; that thought sustains me. Last night I fell asleep all in tears, talking with him as intimately as though he had been present.

You will come to see me, will you not, dear? The weather will be so fine at Nohant. Our northern provinces are so truly beautiful, after seeing that dusty and barren Provence, that I now fancy myself living in an Eden, and invite you to it as though you would feel as enchanted therewith as I am. But, at heart, I know well that you will only come for my sake, and to live with a being who loves you, and who, among women, completely esteems and loves but you. I shall, per-

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\* Dr. Gaubert, sen.

haps, offend you, for you believe in the grandeur of women, and regard them as better than men. That is not my opinion. Having been degraded, it is impossible that they should not have acquired the manners of slaves; and it will require more time to reclaim them than men will need to reclaim themselves. When I think of it, I too have the spleen; but I do not wish to live too much in the present. Pending the time when we shall all become one family, God has surrounded us by partial families, still very imperfect and ill-organised, but with such genial qualities as give us all the necessary courage for waiting and hoping. Let us, therefore, not permit ourselves to be cast down by the general state of evil. Do we not possess profound, reliable, and lasting affections? Shall we not find in them the strength necessary to bear up against the follies and weaknesses of mankind? You possess your Manoël,\* the man you love beyond all others, and who loves you with all the ardour of a first love. Do not, therefore, complain too much. He is an admirable creature; the more I have seen of him the more I have understood how much you must cherish one another, and the charming gaiety which preserves you from all vexation does not proceed, as you sometimes pretend, from natural light-heartedness. On the contrary, I believe that yours is a very serious mind, but you possess in your home a fund of unalterable bliss, and that is, in many respects, the secret of your great philosophy.

Good-bye, my dear; write to me often. Always love me. Do not scold Emmanuel † for never writing to me. Tenderly also kiss your kind Manoël for me, and speak of me to all our true friends.

I send you a letter for Gaubert's brother; be good enough to forward it to him.

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\* The husband of Madame Marliani.

† Emmanuel Arago.

*To M. CALAMATTA, Brussels.*

PARIS, 1st May, 1840.

DEAR CARABLAGAI,

I have been hissed and hooted down as I expected. Every word liked and approved of by you and my friends provoked roars of laughter and storms of indignation. The whole audience denounced the play\* as immoral, and it is not certain that the Government will not prohibit it. The actors, disconcerted by such a reception, lost their heads and played very badly. The piece was, nevertheless, played to the last, much attacked on one hand, much defended on the other, much applauded and much hissed. I am well satisfied with the result, and will not alter a single word for the subsequent representations.

I was there, very quiet and even quite cheerful; for though people say and believe that an *author* must feel overpowered with apprehension and agitation, I did not experience any such feelings, and the incident seems very absurd to me. The only sad side of it is the observing how coarse and corrupt public taste has grown to be. I never thought that my piece was fine; but I will always persist in believing that it is thoroughly moral, and that the sentiments developed therein are pure and delicate. I bear philosophically with contradiction; I have long understood the times we live in and the people with whom we have to deal. Let them talk; we should have nothing more to do were they not as they are.

Do not regret that little unpleasantness. I had foreseen

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\* *Cosima*, a drama.

it, you know, and was as calm and resolute on the eve as I now am on the morrow.

If they do not forbid my play, my impression is that it will eventually succeed and command attention. If not, I shall have done my duty, and will again say what, in some form, I shall say all my life. Come back to us soon. I miss you as though you were some essential part of my life.

Yours in heart,

GEORGE.

*To MAURICE SAND, Guillery, near Nérac.*

PARIS, 20th September, 1840.

MY BOY,

I received your second letter from Guillery. I am happy to learn that you are well and enjoying yourself. Be careful with your little pony; bear in mind that you are not yet a famous horseman, and do not gallop too recklessly on the sands. There are here and there roots of trees hidden by the sand, and against which horses sometimes come in contact with their feet. Then the best horse may fall, throwing the rider over his head, as happened with Emmanuel, who turned such a risky somersault under your own eyes. That is just how my poor father was killed. Of course I know that if people always thought of the accidents that might happen they would never do anything, and would be only stupid poltroons. But there is a certain degree of prudence and common sense which is not incompatible with boldness and pleasure. You are acquainted with my ideas on this point. I am very brave and never meet with any harm; it is simply a matter of habit. All this is merely to

urge you to keep your horse well in hand, and not to throw yourself forward when galloping. The weight of the rider's body, when thrown back, gives strength to the hocks and directs the horse's attention to them, at the same time giving freedom to the horse's shoulders. In fact, as says that admirable Mr. Génot, we must *multiply the points of contact*.

We still go to the riding school, Solange and I; and Calamatta, who has just returned, made a dashing reappearance there on that pretty chestnut which you have sometimes ridden. I, from time to time, mount Silvio, the big horse which, pardon me for mentioning it, indulged one day in some *strange sounds* when M. Latry\* was spurring him. He is as silly as a goose and as tough as a dog; but he answers the spur pretty well and shows plenty of strength and dash. I like him pretty well, although he chafed my leg a little. There is now at the riding school a regular darling of a horse, light, ardent, always prancing, but never kicking. He is my *passion*, and M. Latry says that I show him off to advantage. Solange does not yet dare to mount him, but that time will come. She does her best on Légère and Diavolo.

Enough of horses; but, before leaving the animal kingdom, I will tell you that our friend Rey has uttered a new word, better than *béat* or *plantureux*; it is *grelu*.† What that word may mean I will not try to teach you; for when people talk *like a book*, they do not stand in need of being understood. Rey greatly amuses Rollinat, who wakes up at night, so he says, to laugh at the thought of what he has said. Emulation

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\* A riding master.

† A *patois* word, signifying poor, miserable, of little worth; possibly derived from *grêlé* (hailstruck).



also inspires Rollinat with witticisms. He has discovered a new species of giraffe (*caméléopard girafé*) and many other strange things. So, you see, he still cultivates a flowery style and full-blown metaphor! (*métaphore plantureuse*).

The day before yesterday we had Balzac to dinner. He is quite mad. He has discovered the *blue rose*, for which the horticultural societies of London and Belgium offer 500,000 francs reward (*so he says, says he*). He will, besides, sell the seeds at five francs each, and for that great botanical production he will only have to spend fifty centimes. Thereupon, Rollinat naïvely remarked:

"Well, why do you not set about it at once?"

To which Balzac replied:

"Oh, because I have so many other things to do! but I will see to it one of these days."

We went to see *La Méduse*, about which Delacroix said so much to us; it is indeed a fine melodrama. The scenery and the setting of the last two acts are superb. The raft scene produces a complete illusion, and even reminds one of Géricault's masterpiece in an astonishing degree. I hope that the play will be still running when you return. That is all we have seen since my last letter. I spend all my nights on the *Tour de France*,\* which is nearly completed.

Good night, my Bouli.† We are now in the midst of a terrible storm, and you do not hear it; for you, no doubt, snore louder than the storm itself. Farewell; a thousand kisses. Write to me.

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\* *Le Compagnon du Tour de France*, one of George Sand's works.

† Maurice Sand's pet name.

*To M. L'ABBÉ DE LAMENNAIS, Sainte-Pélagie.\**

PARIS, February, 1841.

That for which I am above all things anxious, sir, is that you should not believe that a silly wounded vanity could ever cause me to abjure the sentiments of affection and respect which I entertain for you. Even had I certainty that you intended addressing an incisive letter to me from the depth of your prison, as everywhere people have given me to understand, I should have accepted it, not without grief, but at least without bitterness.

Our poor friend Gaubert † must have told you so, and I am sure that in your heart you never doubted it. I believe, I persist in believing, that I am much misrepresented to you, and had people attributed to me such words or such thoughts, the latter would have closed your soul against all esteem for and all confidence in those who do not wear a *beard on the chin*.

I am aware that there are around you people who seize every opportunity of calumniating me with a fury which grieves without irritating, because gratuitous hatred seems to me related to hypochondria and almost to dementia. There is sometimes in the most "foolish declamations" a certain cleverness (that is precisely the characteristic of the malady called *hatred*), which imposes upon the most noble souls and the strongest minds. I never could consider as a cowardly and wicked action the sort of anathema, hurled by you against our sex without exception.

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\* A prison in Paris for political offenders. † Dr. Gaubert, jun.

I scarcely dare to repeat the expressions that you employ in your generous indignation, when I consider that it is you who are taken to task; you, sir, who are the object of a religious veneration on my part and on that of all who surround me. Had I thus judged your severity, I should never have needed the explanation which you are good enough to give me; for I should never have had the slightest doubt as to your intentions.

I merely feared, I repeat, one of those impulses of paternal wrath which you feel when suspecting justice and truth to be misunderstood, and which, thanks to God, and happily for our own time, you cannot repress. Rest assured that, had such been your inspiration, although I did not consider myself corrected with justice and discrimination, I should, in certain respects, have respected your thought and your intention as I do all that proceed from you.

I say *in certain respects*, for, as regards the deficiency of logic and argumentation with which you twit us, I can swear, by the affection I feel for you, that, as far as I am concerned, I heartily and cheerfully acknowledge that you are truly in the right. Your rebuke might have hurt me, had I had the pretension of being that which I am not, and I confess that I never could understand how people could find their happiness and dignity in the assumption of a part not natural to them.

Granting this (and you know my sincerity in that respect), I will dare to say to you that I am not quite convinced of the inferiority of women, even in that respect. Shall I say that I ever met with women capable of listening to you, of following and grasping your reasoning for hours together? I have not the right to say so; that would be attributing to myself the

competency of such a judgment; but I instinctively and conscientiously believe it. It is true that such women have always lived like flowers in the shade, and never brought any petition before the Chamber.

Do you not, sir, think me to-day much imbued with the *esprit de corps*? That is quite disinterested on my part, for I have never seriously examined my intellect, and never was seriously moved but by sentiment. Besides, I have suffered much more from the absurdity and malice of women than from that of men.

But I have always attributed that *de facto* inferiority of women, which generally exists, to the inferiority which men seek to establish for ever in principle in order to abuse the weakness, the ignorance, the sanity, in short, all the defects which our education causes in us. Half rehabilitated by Christian philosophy, we still stand in need of further rehabilitation.

As we reckon you among our saints, as you are the father of our new Church, we are all distressed and disheartened when, instead of blessing us and raising our intellect, you, rather drily, say to us: "Keep back, my good girls, you are all regular simpletons!"

I reply for my sisters: "That is the truth, master; but teach us how to be no longer simpletons!"

The means does not reside in telling us that the evil proceeds from our nature, but in showing us that it is the result of the manner in which your sex has governed us up to the present. If we entreat God to give us intelligence, He perhaps will accede to our request, without, for that matter, giving us a beard, and you will then be greatly mortified in turn.

I need much courage, sir, in order to joke with you, while my heart bleeds at the idea of the sufferings which you endure in your prison. If I dare to do so, it is because I know your unalterable serenity, that fund of gaiety which you possess, and which is, in my eyes, the most admirable proof of your benevolence and candour.

You wished to undergo that ordeal: that is an excess of kindness on your part towards so light and cold a generation. Whilst admiring you, I cannot commend you for risking your health and life for that race which is not worthy of you. But God will not be the accomplice of your jailers, and, in spite of yourself, He will restore you to our devotion and respectful affection.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. CHARLES DUVERNET, La Châtre.*

PARIS, 27th September, 1841.

I had intended writing to you for some few days, but have been tired out during the last fortnight. In our next number\* you will see that I have been very busy. When I have been scribbling for ten days together, I have to devote four or five days to the correction of the proofs. Then I have my correspondence for the said *Revue* and my private affairs, which are always behind, and require another week. You see how many days there are before me this month, to think about what I am going to say in the next number. Happily, I have not to seek for ideas: they are clearly defined in my brain. I have no more doubts to contend with; they vanished like

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\* The *Revue Indépendante*, for which George Sand used to write.

mere clouds before the light of conviction : I no longer need to question my sentiments ; they speak loud from the bottom of my heart, and impose silence upon every hesitation, every literary vanity, every fear of ridicule.

Such has been, for me, the use of philosophy, and of a certain philosophy, the only one intelligible for me, because it is the only one that is as complete as the human soul in the days we have come to. I do not say that that is the last word of mankind ; but, up to the present, it is its most advanced expression.

Yet you still inquire what is the use of philosophy, and scorn as useless and dangerous subtleties the knowledge of truth sought by all men since mankind first existed, and torn off as it were, piece by piece, layer by layer, from the depths of the obscure mine, by the best and most intelligent men of all times. You treat rather lightly the work of Moses, of Jesus Christ, of Plato, of Aristotle, of Zoroaster, of Pythagoras, of Bossuet, of Montesquien, of Luther, of Voltaire, of Pascal, of Jean Jacques Rousseau, etc., etc., etc. ! Unaccustomed as you are to philosophical formulæ, you disparage all those great men. You find, in your kind heart and generous soul, fibres which answer all those formulæ, and you greatly wonder why people take the trouble of reading, in a rather profound language, the doctrine which legitimates, explains, consecrates, sanctifies, and sums up all there is in you of benevolence and acquired or natural truths. The work of philosophy never was and never will be anything else but the purest and loftiest summing up of whatever truth, kindness, and strength are diffused among men at the time of the philosopher's investigations. Let an idea of progress, a superiority of views, and a mighty impulse of love and faith

dominate that work of investigation, and, as it were, of moral and intellectual statistics of the riches previously as well as contemporaneously acquired by men, and there is philosophy. The botchers of journalism, who apparently expect to be amused by almanack prophecies, exclaim: "You are not telling us anything new." Good people like you say: "We are as learned as you!" So much the better; give us then a thousand, or only a hundred people like you, and we will regenerate the world. But since, hitherto, people scarcely ever did us the pleasure to tell us that we were insisting too much on well-known and accepted truths; since, on the contrary, we hear from all directions the following words, "We are quite aware that Jesus, Rousseau, and Company preached charity and fraternity; we have spoken about it, and do not know why you still mention things which nobody cares for and which we do not want!" since that language is held to us not only by the nobles, the priests, and the *bourgeois*, but by certain Republican organs, at the head of which is the *National*,\* we are fully justified in thinking that ours is not so narrow an undertaking as it seems to be, nor so easy as it appears to you, or so useless as the *National* affects to believe. Certain other classes do not think so, and fail to perceive that the old fraternity which we preach, and the young equality which we endeavour to make possible, *as soon as we can*, are trifling truths, accepted, triumphant, and about which it is idle to preoccupy oneself. Those classes, anxious and dissatisfied, believe, on the contrary, that our old truths never enlisted the attention of those who could not foresee that any personal advantage to them was likely to accrue from

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\* An important Liberal newspaper under the reign of Louis Philippe.

their application; that, I believe, is rather illustrated by the institutions made in favour of the *bourgeoisie*.

If, therefore, convinced as you are that the masses are all initiated with the *why*, *wherefore*, and *therefore* of the past and future, do pray join in our labours, and you will soon perceive that up to the present you have never known the masses. You will see them full of ardour and anxiety, and mostly animated with those kind and grand sentiments without which neither Leroux, nor yourself, nor I would have them (since nothing is isolated in the moral order of mankind, as in the physical). But you will also notice enormous obstacles, culpable resistance, obstinate and selfish interests, and an inconceivable vagueness of thought and belief, which, in those masses, dominates them all; dreadful uncertainty, a thousand whims, a thousand contrary dreams; the honest among them wishing for good, but scarcely three men in a million agreeing upon the same point, because if, as you truly remark, the *instinct* of truth and justice is to be met with everywhere, nowhere has that instinct reached the state of *knowledge* and certainty. And how could that be possible when history presents a chaos where all men hitherto have lost themselves before finding the profoundly political, philosophical, and religious notion of indefinite progress? a notion which all minds of any importance in our century have at last adopted without restriction, even those whose present interests are affected by the notion.

Numerous and admirable researches, conclusions proceeding from several points of view opposed in appearance, but agreeing as to the main object, inculcated the human soul with that notion, and you received it almost at your birth, without inquiring, ungrateful child, what divine mother



imparted to you that new life, which your fathers did not share, and which you will bequeath larger and more complete to your children when you have borne it within you and animated it, as it were, by your own essence. That mother of mankind, which good people ought to cherish and regard with reverence, is religious philosophy. Yet you call it the *pons asinorum*, instead of confessing that, without it, without that enlightenment gradually imparted to you from day to day, you would be savages.

I will put to you a question to which there is no reply. Why are you not a coarse and covetous landed proprietor, harsh to the poor, deaf to all ideas of progress, furious against the movement of equality which is taking place among men? And yet you are the reverse of such a man. What made you as you are? What taught you, from childhood, that selfishness is hateful, and that a noble thought, a grand impulse of the heart, does more good to yourself and to others than money and material prosperity? Is it the revolutionary idea diffused in France since '93? No, unless it have been in an indirect way; for we scarcely understood, when children, that revolution which inspired so much horror in some, so much regret in others. What then detached our young souls from egotism, rather preached and deified, it must be admitted, in all our families? Was it not simply the Christian idea, that is, the distant reflection of an antique philosophy having, like all pretty profound philosophies, reached the state of a religion? And when, afterwards, we became insurgents and rioters (*émeutiers et bousingots*) in heart, if not in deed, what was urging in us the desire for those struggles and the necessity of those emotions? Was it *ambition*, as has been said of the Republicans of those days?

We did not even know what ambition was ; it was the revolutionary idea of '93 which was aroused in us at an age when people read the philosophy of the eighteenth century, and when they begin to get passionately excited in favour of that era of application, incomplete and baneful in many respects, but grand and holy in its results, which leads from Jean Jacques to Robespierre.

And, to-day, why are we still agitated by want of action and fanatical zeal, without knowing how to seize our task and begin it, and with whom should we unite our efforts, upon whom are we to rely ? For, indeed, do we know all this, have we known it, within the last ten years ? Had we known it we should not be where we are now. Well, then, that which always makes us so ardent for a moral revolution in humanity is the religious and philosophical sentiment of equality, the sentiment of a divine law, misunderstood ever since men have existed, recognised at last and conquered in principle, but still obscure, half plunged into the Styx, denied and rejected by the nobles, the priests, the sovereign, the *bourgeoisie*, and even the *democratic bourgeoisie* itself ! The *National* ! We are well acquainted with its thought, better than you are, and I could not help smiling, I confess, at the *Jesuitism* which good big Thomas made use of in his letter in order to force you back into his net ; semi-duping, semi-duped, trying to cheat others a little (I mean in politics, but not in money matters) in order to console himself for being thoroughly cheated !

To conclude, my boy, I will therefore ask you, you with whose heart I am thoroughly acquainted, you whom I know to be as *romantic* as myself respecting those ideas of equality which were too long believed 'only fit for Don Quixote, but which are now beginning to be acknowledged as fit for all,

how did you become a profound and sincere partisan of equality?

Was it the doctrines of the *National* that made you so? But it does not possess any. It never had any doctrine, even in the days of Carrel,\* who was far superior to its whole staff. It only gives vent to its thoughts in order to say, from time to time, that equality, as you and I understand it, is impossible, if not abominable. Dupoty, that unfortunate victim of an odious *coup d'état* of the House of Peers, was an aristocrat, and used to blush at the partisans with whom they declared him to be associated. He did not even possess the merit of being guilty of sympathy for those poor fools of Communism who may be blamed in private, and whom the *National* insulted and branded, even under the knife of the peers! a cowardly act, inasmuch as if Communism had made a revolution—that is to say, when it has made one, and that will unfortunately be too soon—the *National* will cringe at its feet; just like Carrel himself, who, on the 26th of July, spoke of the revolution as being but a “squalid riot,” and on the 1st of August was talking about it in very different language. Do you doubt what I say here? You will see! Remember only this: we are progressing fast, very fast, and there is no time to lose, not a day, not an hour, to tell the people what we have to tell them.

That is to the point. Michel, who is undoubtedly the most intelligent man of that party of the *National*, the Malagasy† and yourself (who, thank God! belong to that party only because you failed to find one expressing the

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\* Armand Carrel.

† A nickname of Jules Néraud, one of George Sand's friends.

aspirations of your heart), you say : " Let us make a revolution, and then we shall see."

We ourselves say : " Let us make a revolution ; but let us see at once what we shall have to see afterwards."

The *National* says : " Those people are mad, they wish for institutions. They ! sectarians, philosophers, dreamers ! their institutions will be devoid of common sense."

We say : " Those men are blind, they wish to rouse the people in favour of already obsolete institutions, scarcely modified, and in no wise suited to the wants and ideas of the people, whom they do not know, and who do not know them any better."

The *National* says : " Look at their fine institutions ! Ah, they talk about philosophy ! What do they want to do with their philosophy ? Jean Jacques told us all about it ; Robespierre tried to apply it. We will continue the work of Rousseau and of Robespierre."

We say : " You have neither read Rousseau nor understood Robespierre, and that because you are not philosophers ; whereas Rousseau and Robespierre were both philosophers. You will not be able to apply their doctrine, because you know neither what the one meant to say nor what the other meant to do. With war abroad and strength at home, you believe yourselves able to give glory to France and to your party. The people do not want glory, they want happiness and virtue. If these can only be had at the cost of a war they will wage it, and will perhaps take you as leaders, if you show yourselves capable of fighting any other than the very insignificant battle of pens ; but, whilst waging war, France will have institutions, and such you cannot give her, you are incapable. Your ignorance, your inconsistency, your violence, and your

vanity are obviously manifest in every line you write, even with respect to the least important matters. Who, then, will make those laws? A Messiah? We do not believe in him. Revelers? We have not seen any. We? We do not read the future, and do not know what material form human thought will have to take at any given moment. Who then, I ask again, will make those laws? We all, the people first; we and you into the bargain. When the moment comes it will inspire the masses."

Yes, we say again, the masses will be inspired. But under what conditions? Under those of being enlightened. Enlightened in what respect? In all respects: truth, justice, religious ideas, equality, liberty, and fraternity; in short, *their rights and duties*.

Enter upon the discussion here, if you like; we will listen to you. Tell us where right ends, where duty begins; tell us what sort of liberty that of the individual will be, what sort of authority will be wielded by society. What will be its policy? what the condition of the family? what the distribution of labour and wages? what the condition of proprietorship? Discuss, examine, lay down, elucidate, bring forth all the principles, proclaim your doctrine and faith with regard to all those points. If you possess truth, we will go on our knees before you. If you do not, though sincerely seeking for it, we will esteem you, and only contradict you with the deference due to brothers.

But indeed, instead of seeking for those discussions, of which the masses hold perhaps some vague solutions (which only await a well-enunciated problem to clearly manifest themselves), instead of daily telling the people the profound things which should cause them to consider their condition,

*Letters of George Sand.*

pointing out to them the principles whence they should  
e their institutions, you confine yourselves to vague  
ulæ which mutually contradict themselves, and respecting  
ch you are as reticent as the magi or oracles of old. You  
afine yourselves to a strife, at once acrimonious, in bad  
ste and devoid of wit, and reject all profound discussion  
with certain men and respecting certain things. It is possible  
hat a journal of such a character as yours may be necessary  
in order to arouse somewhat the wrath of the malcontents  
and to strike terror into the souls of the rulers, but it is only  
a coarse instrument. Let it act then. We appreciate it as  
we ought, and reserve ourselves in order not to shake one  
of the forces of the Opposition, which has none to spare;  
but, in our eyes, as in the eyes of the people, it is but a blind  
force; and, when those who bring that machine, that shape-  
less catapult into play, fancy they represent both the people  
and the army, we send them back to their elephants and to  
their timber, like regular mechanics, which they are. To this  
you reply: "A paper which appears daily, and is exposed to  
all the rigour of the laws of September,\* cannot, like a  
voluminous philosophical treatise, go to the bottom of things.  
The opposition at every instant can only be a contest of  
facts" (*une guerre de fait à fait*).

Very good; but if you are capable men—the future repre-  
sentatives of France, as you pretend—why do you not cause  
that necessary but gross opposition to be made by your do-  
mestics? If you only trust to your activity, to your courage and  
your disinterestedness (we grant that you possess these three  
things, and that is a good deal), well! act, but do not deny

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\* The laws of September, restricting the freedom of the Press.

that a more serious and more penetrating criticism may be made, a criticism going to the very heart of things which you barely touch upon. Do not deny that political doctrine must be discussed and supported on the bases indispensable to every society—unity of belief. Instead of railing at and rejecting fundamental ideas, encourage them, disclose your own, if you have any, as you say; unite at least in heart with those who wish to build the temple—you who only construct the road thereto.

Well, now, in place of that, instead of regarding them as your brothers, you rail at them, insult them, you feign to despise them, and to know better than they that which you do not even understand! Ah, well! it is of little consequence to us, and we shall not be the first to break the frigid silence now existing on either side. But when you lack this prudence you will perhaps find some one who can talk to you. Meanwhile, you are very mean; for we attack your doctrines, we take your master Carrel to task, we questioned your thoughts for ten years, and not one of you had a word in reply. This pretended disdain on the part of such mighty people as you is truly comical, and cannot offend us; but it gives reason for believing that you are great hypocrites and personally very ambitious, you who take so much umbrage at that which you call our *competition*; you who inform against the other Opposition journals whose *competition* you fear, for not having paid the stamp duties; you who only live by hatred, pettiness, envy, and false pride. We know you thoroughly, and, if we do not inform against you to the public, it is because you are not strong enough to do much mischief, and because there is plenty to do just now besides troubling about you.

This outburst, my dear boy, will make you believe that there is latent in our hearts a fierce war against the *National* and its *learned cabal*. I can give you my word of honour that, since I left you, this is the first time I have spoken of it. Living in the seclusion of my study, and only seeing Leroux, who likewise works in his own corner, but for a few moments at the office to arrange with Viardot about our contributions, and to write a few letters concerning the office work connected with the journal, we only hear of the ill-will and petty ways of the *National* to laugh slightly at the *impudence* with which, starting with three subscribers, and only possessed of three editors (our three selves), exposed to the insults and the fury of the whole newspaper press, we launched forth on the open sea without any concern about the morrow. We feel so strong in our convictions that, even though nobody should listen to us, as it is here a question neither of money nor glory, we should feel certain of having done our duty, obeyed an internal impulse which urges us, and left some truths written down which, one day, will put men on the way to further truths.

Putting everything at the worst, that is the worst that could happen to us, and it is quite good enough to furnish us with courage. Therefore I feel more plucky than I ever did at any other period of my life, and I experience a calm that will not, I promise you, be altered by the *violent declamation* I have just written against your *National*. Why should I restrain myself with you when I feel inclined to curse a little? That relieves me, and only proves with what ardour I would lay my hands on your heart in order to dispute with the devil himself over its possession. When, in the streets or in the drawing-room



of Madame Marliani, where I visit once a week, I perchance overhear some heresy against my faith, or some gossiping against our persons, I do not, for all that, miss a stitch, for at such moments I hem pocket-handkerchiefs, and I shall not compromise myself by what I may say to persons who are indifferent to me ; to such we must speak through the press ; if they should not listen, what does it matter ? But, since I can dispose of a night, which may not be the case again for two or three months, I have taken advantage of it to chat with you, and to tell you that you are devoid of common sense when you say : " I am a man of action ; what is the use of wasting time in reflections ? "

It is a gross error to believe that some are purely men of action, and some purely men of reflection. Who was more a man of action than Napoleon ? if he had not reflected well and profoundly on the eve of every battle, he would not have gained so many. It is true that he reflected more quickly than we, but because of that he reflected all the more. What is an action without reflection, without prior meditation ? There is a proverb which says : " Where are dogs going ? " (*Où vont les chiens ?*) And you know that people have written and discussed with amusing gravity as to whether dogs, as they walk straight ahead, to the right, or to the left, with that serious and busy air which distinguishes them, have any object, any idea, or if they move without purpose.

It is certain that even the most stupid animals, even polypuses, do not act without an object. How could man have any action whatever without will, and will without thought, and thought without sentiment, and sentiment without reflection, and consequently action, without the play of all his faculties ? The more you pose as a man of action,

the more you will affirm that reflection occupies a great part of your existence; unless you be a madman, or the blind instrument of a party that dictates without explaining and commands without convincing. No, that is not so; no party in these days has any such blind instrument, and you are the last man I know to be such.

Act, then, as you wish in the sphere of present activity, to which what is called Republican opinion attracts you. You will not take a step without doubt and examination on your part. Therefore do not fear to read philosophical works. You will see that they singularly abridge irresolution. When good and penetrating, they become like the multiplication table, learned by heart. There is no longer any need to reckon with one's fingers; the slow calculations of experience become useless. They have been acquired by the memory, engraved on the brain, and have been absorbed by the faculty of conclusion. There is not a single man, however little strong or complete, however little capable of quick and wise decision, of controlling for a moment his individuality, on the threshold of whose brain, as says the great Diderot, does not stand that *ready armed Minerva*.

All this is to let you know that you make me write a letter quite useless for your instruction, since in reading more attentively, and twice rather than once, Leroux's excellent and admirable articles in our *Revue*, you would have found the very reply to the *why* you put to me.

Besides which, if you had examined your own reflections with complete ingenuousness, you would have proved yourself far greater (capable as you are of penetrating the profundities of truth) than you believe yourself to be when saying: "I am only a man of action." A man of action; such is Jacques

Cherami, who carries a letter without knowing what it is about or for whom it is intended ; come, don't lessen yourself by a comparison like that. You have dreamed and felt much ; you told me, during the time I recently spent with you, things too remarkable as great sentiment of heart and great righteousness of spirit in politics for me to consider you as a labourer in the vineyard of *my lord Thomas*, that good farmer who so well knows how to say : *Baskets, farewell, the vintage is gathered !*

Good night, dear friend ; read this to Fleury and your wife, if it should interest her, but to nobody else, I pray ; I should be quite upset if people thought I was occupied in intriguing against the *National*, because I edit a *Revue* which it does not wish to advertise. God preserve me from engaging in any such paltry newspaper war ! I have not a word to reply to all those who ask me : " Why does the *National* stand aloof from you ? " I tell them I know nothing about it. Silence, then, as to the above. Embrace your wife and children for me.

Alas ! I believe that I shall not be able to write to you again this winter. I have not the time to talk and to run on unrestrained. Nevertheless, write to me ; but let us drop discussions which serve no purpose. If, in short, the *Revue* bores you, do not believe that I shall be offended at your *giving it up*. We possess subscribers, and we do not impose any opinion, even upon our best friend. I feel certain that, some day, people will read Leroux as they do the *Contrat Social*. Those are the exact words of M. de Lamartine. Therefore, if it wearies you to-day, rest assured, nevertheless, that the greatest productions of the human mind have wearied many others, who were not disposed to receive them at the

moment when they first resounded. A few years later some blushed at not having been among the first who understood and relished those productions. Others, more sincere, said : " Upon my honour, I at first was quite in a fog, though afterwards completely taken hold of, carried along, and deeply penetrated." As for me, I could say precisely the same concerning Leroux. At the time of my scepticism, when, my head distracted with sufferings and doubts respecting everything, I was writing *Lélia*, I was simply worshipping the kindness, the simplicity, the science, the profundity of Leroux ; but I was not convinced. I looked upon him as being the dupe of his own virtue. I have since greatly modified my views ; for, if I possess a spark of virtue, it is to him that I am indebted for it, thanks to my study of him and his works during the last five years. I pray you laugh in the faces of the clowns who will cry over him, *alas ! alas !* You see that I do not treat you as a clown, and that I warmly defend Leroux before you. Farewell again. Love me still a little. I am well satisfied with the morals of Jean,\* but not with his *physique* ; his hands are afraid of water.

You did not say a word about *Horace*.† As for that, I allow you to think ill of it either to-day or at any time. You are fully aware that I am not very sensitive about my *literary genius*. If you do not care for the novel, say so freely. I should like to dedicate something to you that would be to your taste, and I will, therefore, delay such dedication for the result of some better inspiration.

G.

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\* A domestic servant to George Sand.

† The title of one of George Sand's novels.

To M. CHARLES PONCY, Toulon.

PARIS, 27th April, 1842.

MY BOY,

You are a great poet, the most inspired and the most gifted of all the fine proletarian poets which, with joy, we have lately seen arise. You may some day be the greatest poet of France, if vanity, which kills all our *bourgeois* poets, does not enter your noble heart; if you preserve intact the precious treasure of love, pride, and kindness which imparts genius to you.

People will endeavour to corrupt you, doubt not; they will make you presents, they will be anxious to give you a pension, a decoration perhaps, as they did to a literary workman, a friend of mine, who had the prudence to guess their motives and to decline their offer. The Minister of Public Instruction,\* a most competent man, has already *scented* in you the true breath, the redoubtable might of a poet. Had you confined yourself to singing about the sea and Désirée,† nature and love, he would not have sent you a library of books. But *Hiver aux riches*,‡ the *Méditation sur les toits*,§ and other sublime outbursts of your generous soul, caused him to open his ear. "Let us bind him with praises and kindnesses," said he to himself, "in order that he may only sing about the deep and his mistress."

Therefore beware, noble child of the people! Yours, perhaps, is a mission grander than you suspect. Resist, suffer, submit to privations, to obscurity, if need be, rather than forsake the sacred cause of your brothers. It is for the

\* M. Villemain.

† *Winter's appeal to the rich.*

† Wife of M. Poncey.

§ *Meditation on the roofs.*

cause of mankind, for the salvation of the future, that God commanded you to work, when giving you such a powerful and ardent intellect. . . .

No, the son of the rich is of a corruptible nature; the child of the people is stronger, and his ambition aims higher than the puerile distinctions of amusements of well-being and vanity. Remember, dear Poncy, the impulse which caused you to say :

*Pourquoi me brûles-tu, ma couronne d'épines ? \**

That was a divine impulse.

Yet, many others have had similar outbursts in this century of corruption and weakness. Money and honours were bestowed upon them; their crowns of thorns ceased to scorch them. Thus are they no Christs, and despite the noise which is now made about them, posterity will relegate them to their proper places.

Make for yourself a place which posterity will confirm. Be, among all the great poets of our time, the only one who, like the archangel Michael, knows how to put the demon of vanity beneath his feet.

I have no wish to alter the commendable gratitude which you doubtless feel for the author of your preface, but that good man did not understand you. He was afraid of you. He gave you bad advice and poor praise. When speaking about you to the public, I hope that I shall speak a little better than he. When you make a new work, pray take me as your editor, and entrust me with the care of your preface.

Farewell; than this there has never been for me a word possessed of more profound meaning, and I have never spoken

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\* My crown of thorns, why dost thou scorch me ?

with more emotion. May your future, your virtue, the safety of your soul, and true glory belong to God ! may your whole being and your whole life rest in His paternal hands, so that hypocrites and mystifiers may not defile His work.

If you wish to write me, although I am by nature and by habit opposed to epistolary intercourse, I feel I shall have pleasure in receiving your letters and answering them. I shall start for the country in a week's time. My address will be, *La Châtre, Department of the Indre*, until the end of August.

Yours truly,

G. SAND.

P.S.—Your poem, *The Convict (Le Forçat)*, caused me to shed tears. What a society ours is ! no expiation ! no rehabilitation ! nothing but ruthless punishment !

Manuscript of the letter to M. de Pompéry, 1842.

OF NEW YORK,

*To M. ÉDOUARD DE POMPÉRY, Paris.*

PARIS, 29th April, 1842.

I owe you a thousand thanks, sir, for the generous and sympathetic appreciation of my writings, which you expressed in the *Phalange*.\* You praise my talent beyond its deserts, but the righteousness and elevated nature of your heart led you to that excess of benevolence towards me, because you recognised in me good intentions. *Pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis*, that is my motto, and the only Latin one I know ; yet, having always in my soul the certainty of *good intentions*,

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\* Name of a newspaper to which M. de Pompéry was a contributor.

I consoled myself as well for other people's injustice as for my own defects.

I now come to prove my gratitude towards you better, in my opinion, than by mere sentences, by requesting a favour of you; that of perusing the little volume which I now send, and in which you will find the revelation of a prodigious poetical talent. If that twenty-year-old *mason-poet* appears to you, at first sight, to proceed a little in the fashion of Victor Hugo, by displaying much *art*, do not judge him too hastily, but read all his productions. You will notice a piece entitled *Méditation sur les Toits*, which is very ingenious and beautiful. Another, entitled *L'Hiver aux Riches*, is pregnant with popular sentiments. Lastly, there is one called *Le Forçat*, in which deep pity is strikingly displayed under the expression of horror and awe. The following line:

Si son âme pour moi devenait expansive! \*

is pregnant with meaning. Everywhere else throughout the book you will find the sentiment of a true and noble love. Besides which, his imagery is abundant, vigorous, and often *riotous*, because of the excessive warmth of its tones.

I am sure that you will encourage so highly gifted, so *wildly* powerful a talent, and that you will be struck by it as I was myself. Although I am not acquainted with either the poet himself or with any one who takes an interest in him, I wish to do my best to make him known, and I begin with you. If you will speak of him in the *Phalange*, and in the other papers in which you write, you will perhaps do an act of justice, you will also give him some valuable advice in

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\* Could his soul but expand to mine !



order to make him understand to what the *soul* of his talent should be directed, and the application of his genius.

Accept once more the expression of my very sincere gratitude. I know that what you have done for me is not due to my *personality*, than which none could be less amiable and attractive. Your kindness I owe to the love of truth and justice, which establishes between us surer and more solid relations than those of the world and a mere conversational intercourse.

Yours faithfully,  
G. SAND.

*To MADAME MARLIANI, Paris.*

NOHANT, 26th May, 1842.

You are indeed very, very kind to write to me so often. Do not grow tired of it, dear friend, even though I may become lazy, that is, tired ; for, after having scribbled for six hours at night, I am almost blind, and my right arm is rather too stiff to allow of my scrawling even a few lines in the daytime. Excuse me when I am in arrears, and always recollect that I think of you, speak of you, and talk with you in my dreams.

All my people are well. I received your letter, which had been fastened to Leroux's by the ink ; it was a lucky day for me to receive both your letters at the same time. I wished I could have placed myself under the same envelope, in order to be more closely with you. The *old man* must be satisfied with me now. He must have had my parcel. The same day I also received news from Pauline,\* who was to sing the *Barbier* †

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\* Pauline Viardot, an actress.

† *Le Barbier de Séville.*

four or five days afterwards, having, not without trouble, succeeded in organising a company for herself. She seems to me to be delighted with Spain, with the hearty welcome they accorded her there, with the lovely sun, and the activity which she needed. She will afterwards start for Andalusia, and return *vid Nohant*.

How delighted I feel for your sake at hearing that your big Manoël\* is about to come back to you. Will he be in Paris towards the end of August? I hope so. If he should return to Spain before then, you ought to accompany him as far as Nohant; he might take the mail-coach thence for Toulouse or Bordeaux as he pleases. Promise me that you will think about it and try to do so.

I am quite surprised at the graciousness of Enrico's sovereign; but I must forbid that great man, who is now reinstated, to allow himself to be intoxicated by royal favour. I request him to stick to his profession, and not to think any more of his guns. At one time he was a terrible man; you made of him a charming woman. He is much better and happier as at present.

What do you say about Pététin's being angry at not having been taken in earnest by me? I, on the contrary, take him more in earnest than he would like. I take him for a kind and excellent young man who wants to play the part of an old dog, who has the strange mania of making himself appear a growler, a misanthropist, and a sceptic, whereas his heart is young and generous in spite of himself. Eh, goodness me! does he believe that he possesses a monopoly of troubles, deceptions, and grief? Have we not ourselves trodden all

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\* M. Manoël Marliani, Spanish Senator, Madame Marliani's husband.

those paths? Do we ignore what life is? I know it better than he does; I am six, eight, or ten years older, and I also know that when people are not born gloomy and misanthropic they do not become so, whatever may be the burden of their personal evils. I have suffered so much myself that the sufferings of others no longer frighten me. My ideas no longer bear upon fear, complaint, or ardent compassion. Like you, I say: "Farther, farther still! let us not stop, but reach our destination!"

And, since I feel the hand of old age coming upon me, I experience a calm, a hope, and a trust in God with which I was unacquainted in the emotional period of my youth. I think God is so good, so very good, to make us grow old, to calm us, and to remove from us those manifestations of selfishness which seem so harsh in youth. What! we complain that we lose something when we gain so much, when our ideas grow wider and broader, when our hearts become enlarged and meeker, and when our consciences, at last victorious, can look back and say: "I have performed my task, the hour of reward is at hand!"

You understand me yourself, dear friend. I saw you crossing the gangway upon which the foot of women trembles and stumbles; you cross it cheerfully, and your troubles, whenever you have any, do not proceed from so puerile a cause as the vain regrets for an age which, once gone, is not to be regretted. Why should they complain, who are still enjoying the life which yesterday was mine? Do they fear that they may never grow old? Does not every phase of our life possess its own attractions, riches, and compensations? We must live as we ride; be supple, avoid checking our steed without need, hold the bridle lightly, go ahead when the wind is

favourable, move slowly whenever the sun of autumn invites us thereto. God has wisely ordained all things, and, with His aid, men will succeed in understanding them.

Such are the thoughts which cross my mind when thinking of Pététin and many more besides whom I know, and who will cross the torrent saying: "I thought it more furious."

Good night, beloved. Many fond things from me to my dear Gaston. Many cordial embraces for yourself. Write to me.

GEORGE.

*To M. CHARLES PONCY, Toulon.*

NOHANT, 23rd June, 1842.

MY DEAR PONCY,

I send you just a word until I can write at greater length. For the last six weeks I have been suffering from dreadful pains in my head, caused by the effect of light *upon my eyes*. I experience much difficulty in getting my work for the *Revue Indépendante*\* done, and, four or five days every week, I am obliged to shut myself up in darkness like a bat; I then perceive sun and nature through the eyes of the mind and through memory; as for the eyes of my body, they are doomed to inaction, which saddens and wearies me prodigiously.

I shall receive M. Paul Gaymard with great pleasure; that is what I wanted to say to you without delay.

I now hasten to tell you that I received your two letters;

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\* A review to which George Sand contributed.

that your poems are still grand and beautiful ; that your *Fête de l'Ascension* \* is a holy and solemn promise never to break the fraternal cup from which you drink courage and grief with the race of powerful-minded men.

Write many such poems, so that they may go home to the hearts of the people, and that the mighty voice which Heaven gave you to sing on the beach may not waste itself on the rocks, like that of the *Harpe des Tempêtes*.† Take the harp of humanity in your hands, and cause it to vibrate as nobody was ever capable of doing before. You have still great progress to make (literarily speaking) in order to *associate your great pictures of rugged nature with human thought and feeling*. Reflect upon what I have underlined here. The whole future, the whole mission of your genius is contained in those two lines. They constitute perhaps an inadequate formula of what I wish to express ; but it is the only one that occurs to me at present, and, such as it is, it is the summing up of my impressions and of my reflections respecting you. Meditate upon it, and, if it suffices to enable you to understand what I expect from your efforts, give me its explanation and development in your reply. That is perhaps an enigma for you. Well, it will furnish labour for your intellect. If you should not understand the solution as I do, remind me of my formula, and I will develop and explain it to you more fully in my next letter. Besides, you have already instinctively solved in an admirable manner, in several of your productions, the difficulty, which I now propose to you, of *associating* (in other words) *the artistic and picturesque sentiment with the human and moral sentiment*. In all the poems in which you speak of

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\* † Title of a poem by M. Charles Poncy.

yourself and of your trade, you strongly feel that if people experience a certain pleasure at seeing in you the individual, because he is especially gifted, that pleasure is greater still at seeing in him the mason, the working man, the proletarian. And why so? Because an individual who poses for a poet, a pure artiste, an *Olympio*, like most of our great men of the *bourgeois* and aristocracy, soon causes us to grow tired of his personality. The delirium, the joys and sufferings of his pride, the jealousy of his rivals, the calumnies of his enemies, the insults of criticism : what matter to us those things over which they dilate, with their comparisons of oaks on whose roots venomous fungi have grown? An ingenious comparison indeed, but which causes us to smile because we perceive the vanity of one single man peeping out through it, and because the interest men feel in another man is proportioned to the interest that man feels in mankind. Man's sufferings excite our interest or sympathy only when endured for the sake of mankind. His martyrdom is only grand when resembling that of Christ; you know it, you feel it, you have said it. That is why your crown of thorns was laid on your forehead: in order that every one of those burning thorns might instil in your mighty forehead one of the sufferings and the sentiment of the injustice endured by mankind! We literary people do not belong to that suffering mankind; neither I, who (unfortunately for me, perhaps) do not know either hunger or misery; nor even you, my dear poet, who will find in your glory and in the gratitude of your fellow-creatures a lofty reward for your personal troubles; 'it is the people, ignorant and forsaken, full of riotous passions, which men excite in a bad sense or repress, without respect for the strength which God nevertheless has not given them without purpose. It is

the people, overwhelmed with all physical and moral evils, without priests of a true religion, obtaining neither compassion nor respect from the classes (up to the present) enlightened, who would deserve to be again plunged into ignorance and degradation, were not God pity, patience, and forgiveness themselves.<sup>1</sup>

I am rather far from the conciseness which I intended to observe when beginning my letter, and I fear that you will have as much trouble to decipher my writing as I myself have to see it. No matter, I will not leave my idea too incomplete. I was just saying that you have solved the difficulty whenever you have spoken about labour. You must now unite everywhere the great outward picture with the main idea of your poetry. You must go in for *marines*; \* they are too beautiful for me to deter you from that kind of production; but you must, without sacrificing the picture, vivify by comparisons those fine pieces of poetry, so powerful and so brilliant in colour. You sometimes hit on the idea, but methinks you have not turned it to sufficient advantage. Thus, most of your *marines* are too *merely artistic*, as is said by *artistes* devoid of feeling. I wish that that implacable sea, which you know and depict so thoroughly well, were more personified, fuller of meaning, and that, by means of one of those miracles of poetry which I cannot indicate to you, but which you ought to discover, the emotions, the terror, and admiration it inspires you with were intimately united to sentiments always human and profound. In short, we must strike the eyes of imagination only in order to penetrate more deeply into the soul than

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\* Generally, a marine painting. Employed here by analogy, and applying to poetical marine descriptions by M. Poncey.

can be done with reasoning. Why the eternal wrath of elements? the struggle between the sky and the abyss, the reign of the sun which pacifies all; why rage, strength, beauty, calm? Are they not all symbols, images related to our own outbursts from within, and is not calm one of the images of the Deity? Look at Homer; how he deals with nature! He is more romantic than all our modern writers; and yet that nature, so well felt and depicted, is but an inexhaustible arsenal which furnishes him with comparisons wherewith to animate and impart colour to the actions of divine and human life. All the secret, all the wonders of poetry, reside in this. You felt it in the *Barque Échouée*,\* in the *Fumée qui monte des Toits*,† etc. I wish you felt it in all the pieces you write; thanks to that, and to that only, they would be complete, profound, and their impression would be indelible. Hugo sometimes felt it; but his soul is not moral enough to have entirely and suitably felt it. It is because his heart is devoid of flame that his muse is devoid of taste. Birds, they say, sing for the sake of singing. I doubt it. They sing their loves and happiness, and in that they are in keeping with nature. But man must do something more, and poets only sing in order to move people and make them think."

I hope this is enough for a blind person. I fear that my handwriting may impart my blindness to you.

Farewell, dear Poncy. Compensate by your intelligence for all I say so ill and so obscurely. Solange and Maurice read your works and love you. Maurice is, I believe, nearly of the same age as yourself. He is nineteen; he has embraced the

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\* *The Stranded Barque*, title of a poem by M. Poncy.

† *The Smoke rising from the Roofs*, title of a poetical production by M. Poncy.



profession of an artist. He is meek, diligent, calm as the calmest of seas. Solange is fourteen. She is tall, beautiful, and proud; she is an indomitable creature, possessed of a superior intellect, and lazy beyond all that can be imagined; she could do anything, but will not try. Her future is a perfect mystery, a sun hidden by the clouds. The sentiment of independence and equality of rights, in spite of her domineering instincts, is rather too much developed in her. It remains to be seen how she will understand it, and what she will do with her power. She was very flattered by your present, and put it into her album in company with the most illustrious autographs.

Have you a number of the *Ruche Populaire*,\* in which my friend Vinçard gives an account of your *Marines*? The *Progrès du Pas-de-Calais*, edited by my friend Degeorge, must also contain an article on the same subject. Besides, the *Phalange* promised me one. If you cannot get those papers, let me know. I will see that they are sent to you. I wrote to Perrotin, my publisher, to send you a copy of *Indiana*, as also one of all new editions of my works as they appear.

As for the verses you sent me, I keep them to myself for the present. I am very thankful for and proud of them. But you must not publish them in your next collection; it would preclude me from pushing them as I would wish; I should seem to admire you because you praise me. Stupid persons would not see anything in my supporting your work, and would say that I am raising altars to myself. That would injure your success, if we may thus call the approbation of

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\* The name of a newspaper.

the press. For, however bad the latter may be, it is necessary in a certain measure.

Farewell again, and yours in heart.

Do not take the trouble to keep copies of the verses you sent me. I am careful of them, and if I request you to introduce modifications in those and in the others, you will have enough to do. Do not, therefore, tire yourself with writing more than is required. I can read your handwriting perfectly. If I am severe upon the ideas you emit, you must be patient and courageous. The question is not to write as good a work as the first. In poetry, he who does not advance recedes. You must do much better. I did not speak to you about the blemishes and neglected points in your first volume. There was so much to admire, it was so astonishingly good, that I did not find it in my heart to criticise. But your second volume must be free from those shortcomings. You ought to become perfect before long. Take care of your health, however, my poor boy, and do not hurry. Whenever you do not feel inclined to write, rest, and do not set your body and mind to work at the same time and beyond your strength. You have plenty of time; you are quite young, and we wear ourselves out too quickly. Write only when possessed and urged on by inspiration.

S.

*To THE SAME.*

NOHANT, 24th August, 1842.

MY DEAR POET,

I found your two letters on my return from a journey to Paris, where I went on business, that is, respecting the business of our *Revue*. I am still poorly, and my eyes refuse

to perform their duty. If I should fail to reply to you punctually, do not therefore believe it is my fault. My work itself is always being interrupted, and is resumed with painful and often fruitless efforts.

I believe that, in certain respects, you have improved. Your ideas are more connected, symbolised, and completed. But I want to warn you with the maternal frankness and authority which you are good enough to grant me: you neglect both form and expression, instead of correcting them. I did not point out to you any of the defects in your first printed volume, I only seriously heeded the extraordinary inspiration, the innateness and the luxuriancy of talent disclosed therein. I was fully aware that every page contained either some incorrectness of expression or some metaphor deficient in accuracy, or a *trait*, the taste of which was not correct. If you wish to publish a second volume possessing the same qualities and the same defects as the first, you can do so. I am at your disposal to occupy myself with it with as much zeal and devotion as if your masterpiece were in question. But if you were to listen to the counsels of my serious and severe friendship, you would not publish your new poems until you recognise in them yourself more merits and fewer faults than were noticeable in the earlier ones.

You are so young that it would be inexcusable in you not to make sensible progress every year. Yet though I find in what you have sent me more merits, I also find more faults than in your volume. I am not astonished at this, and I might even say I expected it. It is an inevitable phase of the transformation which takes place in the spirit of a poet as in that of an artiste. I study these phases in my son's paintings, and I studied them in myself during my youth.

'As long as we are in the happy age of progression, we lose at every instant on one side that which we gain on the other.' Whilst that is inevitable, we must none the less carefully watch, exert, examine, and correct ourselves. In painting, we study the works of the masters. In literature, we must do likewise. I would like you to rest yourself for some time, since in the midst of your fatigues and domestic troubles you yourself feel the want of it. You will have to read much of ancient literature, Corneille, Bossuet, Jean Jacques Rousseau; even Boileau, as an antidote to a certain redundancy of expression and of fanciful metaphor, much abused nowadays, and often so by yourself.

I do not wish that you should sacrifice your individuality, that you should cease to be modern and romantic in order to make yourself classic and ancient. But there is no danger of that. Your merits are superabundant, and it is nothing more than a question of knowing how to choose and manage with them. As a young man and an ardent poet, you often display a want of artistic taste; a thing so fine as to be indefinable, so that I should never be able to tell you in what it consists, but without which, nevertheless, there is neither art nor poetry. Were you entirely devoid of it, I should not attempt to advise your trying to develop any, it would be quite useless; but it is because you possess it in plenty, and even superabundance, that I warn you now to be careful in the choice of your expressions. I could easily point out to you, line by line, your successes and your failures in this respect. Thus, the last four lines of *L'Échappée de Mer*\* furnish a comparison, although just,

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\* *An Armlet of the Sea*, the title of a poem by M. Charles Poncy.

extremely bold, yet happy in expression and beautiful. But when, by an audacious neologism, you create the verb *zigzaguer*,\* you merely succeed in giving a vivid idea of a material object, and instead of embellishing it by expression (which is the inexorable duty of poetry), you tarnish it by a vulgar and incorrect term, you display a deficiency of taste. When depicting what is grand, be grand yourself; when you wish to speak in simple terms of what is simple, be simple yourself. When you use the term *zigzaguer* you are neither. If I were to analyse your lines one by one I should weary you, I might perhaps even frighten you, and I am, besides, not of opinion that a work should be taken to pieces word by word, to be afterwards wearily reconstructed. It is better to write another, taking greater pains with it. Were you even to have an assiduous and severe adviser by your side, he would weary you and might perhaps freeze your inspiration. I will perform that wearisome duty for you only when you have resolved to publish. As soon as you have made up your mind send the whole to me, and, if you like, I will undertake the work of pruning and pointing out to you for further examination all that I may consider it necessary for you to alter.

But, in your present state of fatigue and agitation, the wisest thing to do would be to write less and study more. I greatly blame you for carrying on a correspondence which robs you of your time. I do not carry on any. Once a month I write a dozen letters, as much in a friendly way as on business, and each month I receive at least a hundred. But they are only written in idleness, curiosity, and vanity. I

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\* To zigzag.

do not trouble myself to reply to them, unless I see some advantage to myself or others in doing so. My not replying creates enemies, but I resign myself to that, not being able to escape from it, and not having the means to pay a secretary for the satisfaction of other people. You have something better to do, my dear boy, than to waste your time, which is so precious, and your strength, which is so necessary, in spinning out correspondence composed of trifling news such as arises from the mere desire of talking about oneself. Thus, when you have an hour for rest in the evening, read good poetry and good prose; and, without binding yourself to imitate any author, you will acquire, without perceiving it, the habit of a more discriminating taste and more sustained correctness.

As regards the letters you write to me, my dear poet, and which I always review with true pleasure, do not ask if they are well written. They are. Your heart is in them, and that is all the *reader* seeks.

If you have the courage to do what I tell you, before many months have passed you will awake one fine day, having acquired much, and, perhaps without being able to account for it, you will have mastered irreproachable forms of expression for your noble and warm-hearted sentiments.

But work, sickness, misery, you will say. I know well what they are. If you expect to live by your pen and improve at the same time, I tell you that that is more than is possible to begin with, and that you must resign yourself for some years yet, to choose between pecuniary advantages and the development of your talents. If you should fall ill, and thus be quite incapable of manual work, I trust that you would be a good enough son to let me know, and not blush to receive a

favour, if such a term can be applied to the hour of help so sweet to the friend who can bestow it. You have done well in refusing the gold you spoke of, if it were that gold of inferior alloy which we well know, and which soils both the heart and the hand. But the assistance of a friendly heart is another thing. I hope that you will look at it as I do.

Adieu, dear Poncy. Cheer up! Believe that it costs me much to lecture to you as I do.

Yours truly.

I have just another word to say to you. Never show my letters to any but your mother, your wife, or your best friend. That is a point on which I am in the highest degree sensitive. It is almost a mania. The idea that I should write otherwise than only for the person whom I address, or for those who heartily love him, would at once freeze both my heart and my hand. Every one has his own peculiar failing. Mine is an outward appearance of misanthropy, although, in heart, I have no other passion now than the love of my fellows; but my personality has nothing to do with the feeble service which my heart and my faith may render in this world. Some of my fellow-creatures have unconsciously caused me much pain by speaking and writing, even in a kind way and with good intention, about my own person, my *ways and doings*; respect, therefore, the weakness of her whom you call mother.

*To MADEMOISELLE LEROYER DE CHANTEPIE, Angers.*

NOHANT, 28th August, 1842.

MADemoiselle,

I received at Paris, where I have just passed a few days, the letter that you did me the honour to write me two months ago. I should ill respond to the confidence you honour me with if I did not attempt to give you my opinion respecting your present situation. I am, however, a very bad judge in such matters, and I have not the least sense of practical life. I pray you, therefore, to consider the very brief judgment that I am about to submit to you as a synthesis from which I cannot return to analysis, because the details of existence only appear to me as more or less unhappy romances, of which the conclusions relate only to a general maxim—the alteration of society from top to bottom. I find society given over to the most frightful disorder, and, foremost amongst all the iniquities to which I see it devoted are the relations of the sexes, which I consider to be regulated in the most unjust and absurd manner. I therefore cannot advise any one to enter upon a matrimonial union sanctioned by a civil law which asserts the dependence, inferiority and social nullity of woman. I have spent ten years in reflecting on the above, and, after asking myself why all love in this world, recognised or unrecognised by society, is always more or less unhappy, whatever the merits and the virtues of the souls thus associated, I am convinced of the radical impossibility of that perfect happiness, the ideal of love, in conditions of inequality, of inferiority and dependence of one sex in relation to the other. Whether that be the law, the generally recog-



nised standard of morality, opinion, or prejudice, woman, in giving herself to man, is necessarily either bound or culpable.

Besides, you ask me if you will be happy through love and marriage. You will not, I am fully convinced, be so in either the one or the other. But, if you ask me in what other conditions I place the happiness of woman, I should reply that not being able to reconstitute society, and knowing well enough that it will last longer than our brief appearance in this world, I place it in a future in which I firmly believe, and where we shall again see human life in the best conditions, in the bosom of a more advanced society, where our intentions will be better understood and our dignity better established.

I believe in eternal life, eternal humanity, eternal progress,<sup>1</sup> and, as I have in this respect embraced the belief of M. Pierre Leroux, I refer you to his philosophical demonstrations. I know not whether they will satisfy you, but I cannot give you any better; as regards myself, they have entirely solved my doubts and established my religious belief. But, you will say further, must we, like Catholic monks, renounce every enjoyment, every action, every manifestation of this life in the hope of a future? I do not consider that to be a duty, unless for the cowardly and the impotent. That woman, in order to escape from suffering and humiliation, should keep from love and maternity, is a romantic idea which I have enunciated in a novel of mine, *Lélia*, not as an example to follow, but as the picture of a martyr who may awaken thoughts in his judges and executioners, those who declare the law and those who apply it. It was only a poem, and, since you have taken the trouble to read it (in three volumes), you will not, I hope, have seen any doctrine in it. I have never preached any doctrine, I do not feel my intelligence to be equal to it. I

have sought one, I have embraced one. Such is my own synthesis, but I have not the genius to apply my ideas, and truly I should be unable to tell you in what conditions you ought to accept love, submit to marriage, and sanctify yourself by maternity.

Love, fidelity, maternity are nevertheless the most necessary, the most important, and the most sacred things in the life of woman. But, in the absence of a public morality and a civil law which render those duties possible and fruitful, can I indicate to you the particular cases in which, to fulfil them, you ought to submit to or resist the general custom, the civil necessity and public opinion? Upon reflection, mademoiselle, you will recognise that I cannot, and that you alone are sufficiently enlightened as to your own strength and your own conscience, to find a path across those abysses, and a road to the ideal which you conceive.

As for me, in your place I should have but one way of settling these difficulties. I should not consult my own happiness. Convinced that in these days (with the philosophical ideas which our intelligence suggests to us, and the resistance which legislation and opinion oppose to progress, whose necessity we feel) no happiness is possible from the standpoint of egotism, I would accept this life with a certain enthusiasm and a resolution analogous in some sort to that of the first martyrs. This abjuration of personal happiness once made without relapse, considerable light would be thrown upon the question. 'There would thus only remain for me to do my duty as I understood it.' And what would this duty be? To place myself, at the risk of many deceptions, persecutions, and sufferings, in conditions where my life would be most useful to the greatest possible number of my fellow creatures. If

affected by love, what, with such abnegation, will be the aim of your love? To do the utmost good to the object of it. By that I do not mean giving him wealth and the pleasures which it procures, the means of corrupting rather than of edifying. I mean the furnishing him with the means of ennobling his soul, and of practising justice, charity, and loyalty. If without hope of producing these noble effects and possessing that powerful action on the being whom you love, your love and your fortune will do him no good. He will prove ungrateful, and you will be humiliated.

If inspired by the hope of maternity, what (always with such abnegation) will be the object of your hope? It will be to place yourself in conditions the most favourable to the education of your children, and to the good examples and good precepts which you would need to furnish them with.

Finally, if animated by the desire to give good examples to those about you, examine first whether they are susceptible of being impressed and modified by such examples, and, if so, seek conditions in which you can furnish them.

At this point my instruction necessarily concludes. If you were to tell me to apply these three precepts for you, I should perhaps do so quite clumsily. I believe myself possessed of a good conscience and good intentions. But I am not clever in action, and am a thousand times deceived in it. I believe that your judgment is better than mine, and that, if you make use of my theory, you will emerge from the state of uncertainty into which you are plunged. The anxiety you have in regard to some personal satisfaction which I believe it is impossible to secure, is the obstacle in your path, but, if you feel that you have the faith and courage to surmount it, your intelligence will be at once enlightened.

I have not read the works which you did me the honour to send me. They were mislaid with the books during a removal, and I have not been able to find them again. If you have the goodness to send a new supply, I will devote the first leisure hours I have to them. Pray excuse my scrawl, my eyesight is not nearly so good as it used to be. I write letters but seldom, and writing is a trouble to me.

Accept, mademoiselle, the expression of my most particular esteem and regard.

GEORGE SAND.

I shall be at Paris towards the 25th September. Please address me at the office of the *Revue Indépendante*.

TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS.

NOHANT, September, 1842.

MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,

My name is probaby a bad recommendation to you; but if, with beliefs perhaps different to your own, I approach you, full of confidence, to point out a good work to be done, it seems to me that your enlightened wisdom and your spirit of charity may also secure for me a little confidence and kindly attention.

There is one point at least at which souls moving along divers routes must meet. It is the love of justice; and, as all justice proceeds from God, I, perhaps, am not an impious soul and unworthy of mercy; that spirit of justice and goodness I invoke, in daring, without being known to your grace, to confide a secret and to ask a favour.

There is, my lord, in a country parish, a very orthodox working priest, who in no way approves my differences with the letter of the ecclesiastical law, and with whom, consequently, I am not intimately acquainted. I too much respect the sincerity and firmness of his faith to seek to shake it by vain discussions, and besides it seems to me to be good and kindly, since it produces only good and noble actions. A small fortune which I possess, and the fact of my living in their midst, have imposed upon me the duty of helping the sick or indigent peasantry. I have thus been enabled to appreciate the blameless and worthy conduct of this virtuous priest ; and seeing him blessed by all, finding myself at times in relations with him in devising the means of alleviating certain suffering and misery, I can testify to his being an irreproachable man in the eyes of people of every creed.

Within the last few days, having met him in a cottage and returning by the same way as he, I remarked his being very sad and downcast, and, having earnestly questioned him, I elicited the confession which I am about to communicate to your grace. What was confided to me was a secret, and only to your grace would I entrust it ; my so saying is equivalent to telling your grace that I rely absolutely upon your honour and your religion not to seek to discover the name of the priest in question, for I have no authority for the step I am now taking ; I am moved thereto by my heart, and by a sort of inspiration which I believe to be good and true.

A few years ago this priest, touched by the despair of an aged mother of a family, whose son, an honourable man, but overwhelmed by disasters in business, was on the point of being prosecuted and imprisoned for debt, yielded to her pleas for pity, implicitly believed what was told him, and

consented to become bond to the creditors for the trifling sum of 4,000 francs. This was more than he possessed, or, to speak more correctly, he possessed nothing whatever. But, as the creditors then required a guarantee rather than money, which the debtor appeared capable of paying in a few years out of his earnings, the good priest calculated that, putting everything at the worst, he himself would be able with time, and by stinting himself every year, to meet the disaster.

Unfortunately, a short time after, the debtor died, leaving nothing, and the debt fell upon the priest, who obtained a short grace, and, during the last two or three years, has paid the interest, without having been able to reduce the principal by more than 200 francs.

At this point the creditors became very hard and very pressing, demanding the principal at once, threatened proceedings for costs, including those of distraining, and, through having exercised his charity, a respectable and excellent priest may at any moment be exposed to scandal and to poignant shame.

Had I possessed 4,000 francs I should have instantly terminated the inquietude and grief of this good priest. But his case is like my own, with the difference that what has happened to him once has happened to me scores of times, and, that, considering my resources, in proportion to his, I am even more embarrassed than he. My position as a woman, that is to say of a minor in the eyes of the law (a minor forty years old, if it please your grace), does not permit of my borrowing, and I cannot appeal to my friends. Most of them are poor; the few really humane rich people whom I have met are so eaten up by gifts and charities that it would not be advisable to have recourse to them any further. And, besides, I must confess that I am generally acquainted with those who

belong to the most pronounced shade of the *Opposition*, and that, unfortunately, intolerance is at the root of every party in these days. Those who would deprive themselves for a person of their own party charged with some political offence, will not interest themselves about a priest, or be able to understand my doing so.

I have appealed, without having any great knowledge of them, to a few rich and pious people, explaining to them that it was a priest who was concerned, and a priest as orthodox as they could desire. The reply I received was that they had nothing to spare, or that they had poor to provide for (*ses pauvres*). I advised my clerical friend to apply to his bishop; but others advised him not to do so, because his lordship, they say, would blame the action of the good priest as ill-considered and imprudent, and that such confession might injure him in the bishop's estimation. Is that possible? Can human prudence speak where evangelic pity commands? I can say nothing as to that, but, any way, I cannot insist upon a view which presents serious inconvenience.

In this perplexity, the idea occurred to me to address myself direct to your grace, as I had been told that your grace possessed an elevated mind and a truly apostolic soul. I felt confidence, and I dared. I know full well that your grace's duty is better performed than mine, better even than anybody's, and that no little trouble is involved in satisfying all the necessitous appeals with which your grace is overwhelmed. But your grace has numerous and powerful relations, which I have not, and can effectually appeal to the charitable, and a word from your grace is enough to secure implicit belief, whilst a heretic such as I has no credit, and cannot hope to be heard except by a soul as free from

suspicion and of such saintlike loyalty as that of your grace.

I pray your grace to accept the homage of my profound respect.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. CHARLES PONCY, Toulon.*

PARIS, 26th February, 1843.

MY DEAR BOY,

I received your letter this morning, but not your corrections of the *Belle Poule*,\* or the other piece of poetry which you mention. Your lines are in the hands of Béranger, who seems rather disinclined to undertake their examination, and to give advice respecting them. He considered the matter as a delicate one, and feared hurting your feelings by complete frankness and severity. I told him that it was, on the contrary, the greatest service he could render you, and that you would be grateful for it; that you possessed neither the obstinacy nor the proud sensitiveness of other poets, and that you preferred a friend to a flatterer. I will give you his reply as soon as I receive it. In talking about the publication of your second volume, he said: "I do not understand publishing matters any more than you, and he understands them very well, as also the chances of success."

He thinks that poetry, however fine and original it may be, secures but little attention in Paris, where everybody publishes verses, and where the public, being flooded by them, does not take the trouble even to look at them. Really good

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\* The title of a poem by M. Charles Poncy.



poetry is only welcomed by a certain rather limited number of amateurs. Such people must be persons of taste, leading easy and quiet lives. There are but few such people here. They become fewer every day. If you could see the busy life here, so material and greedy of money or coarse pleasures, you would be quite astounded by it.

But to return to Béranger's opinion. He says that if you were to get the printing done in the country the expenses would be only half as great, and the disposal of the work facilitated, the latter being on the spot, as would also be your subscribers. If the work were nicely got up (for that is a consideration with the booksellers here), you might send us a certain number of copies that we could take to a publisher, contriving that he should rob you as little as possible. Perrotin would not rob you at all, but he would be reluctant to undertake a small matter; having carried through important ones rather successfully, he only cares to-day for publications involving a series of volumes. We should see to this.

Meanwhile, let me know if this publication at home offers the best chances of success, as Béranger believes. The expenses charged in connection with your first volume appear to me to be exorbitant, and, if these were reduced by one-half, your profits would be doubled. I believe that you will easily find a publisher who would undertake the cost, upon consideration of being allowed to reimburse himself by a small profit on the sale, or rather a printing publisher, for I do not know if there are, properly speaking, any printers in the country. Moreover, I should send my preface to him just as to a Paris publisher. I do not know why you should not get as much as possible by this work. You are about

to become a father, and a little money will not be any inconvenience.

I would write to two or three towns in the north and the midlands, or would get friends to take a few dozen copies and dispose of them, or place them with booksellers. You, on your side, must be able to do likewise. Let me have a reply then as to all this. Finally, in the last resort, if we waited a month or two, I am nearly sure of a new printing process, which M. Pierre Leroux has discovered, and is about to put in operation, by means of which we should get books printed marvellously cheap. If that turns out well, the thing would do itself, without your having to trouble yourself about it. We should do the printing ourselves, for we intend nothing less than simplifying the process to that extent.

The machinery is made, our great inventor is taking out his patents, and we shall see the whole thing in operation, I believe, next week. If you can procure the *Revue Indépendante*, you will see, in the number for 25th January last, a beautiful article by Leroux on this invention.

Tell me, my dear boy, if you are acquainted with all the philosophical writings of Pierre Leroux? If not, tell me if you feel sufficient power of close attention to read them. You are young and a poet. I have read and understood them without fatigue, I who am a woman and a novelist. That means that I have not a very capable head for such matters.

Nevertheless, as it is the only philosophy that is as clear as day and that can speak to the heart like the gospel, I have plunged into it and have transformed myself; I have found in it calm, strength, faith, hope, and the patient and persevering love of humanity; treasures of my childhood, of which I had dreamed in Catholicism, but which had been destroyed by the

examination of Catholicism, by the insufficiency of a worn-out creed, by the doubt and grief which, in our time, devour those whom egotism and affluence have not brutalised or contaminated. It would take you a year perhaps, perhaps two, to penetrate this philosophy, which is not *bizarre* and algebraic like Fourier's works, but adopts and recognises all that is true, good, and beautiful in every system of morality and every science in the past or the present. These works of Leroux are not voluminous ; after having read them we feel the necessity of carrying them within us, of questioning our own hearts as to the adhesion which it gives to them ; in fact, they constitute a whole religion, at once ancient and novel that we need to penetrate and must carefully brood over. Very few hearts completely accepted the doctrines therein contained ; one must be thoroughly good and sincere not to feel offended by truths.

In fact, if you are possessed of the desire to know mankind and yourself, your head will be steady and firm and full of assurance, and the fire of your poetry will be wholly kindled by knowledge of those works. You will rapidly explain them to Désirée, and you will see that her woman's heart will delight in them. I must, however, tell you that they constitute incomplete, interrupted, and fragmentary productions. Leroux's life has been too much agitated, too unfortunate, to enable him to complete his doctrine. That is what his adversaries reproach him with. But a philosophy is a religion ; how then can we expect a religion to break forth like a novel or a sonnet from a man's head ?

The great epic poems of our fathers were the works of ten or twenty years. Does not a religion take up the whole life of a man ? Leroux is only half-way through his career.

He is possessed of solutions about which his heart feels sure, but whose definition and demonstration for others still require immense labours of erudition and years of meditation. However it may be, those admirable fragments are sufficient to place a just mind and a good conscience in the paths of truth. Besides, they constitute the religion of poetry. If you can assimilate them, you will some day write the poetry of religion.

Let me know and I will send you all he has written. It will be to you like pure wheaten bread of good quality to a healthy stomach. You will go on with your poetry, reserving, every week, one or two solemn hours, for worshipping in that temple of the true divinity.

In that worship you will associate Désirée, gently, without disturbing her belief, if she should be attached to Catholicism. Her mind will form a synthesis, though unconscious of what synthesis is, and a day will come when you will together pray on the shore of that sea where you now live but for love and pleasure. When you both possess a firm and enlightened faith, you will see that the soul of the simplest woman is worth that of the greatest poet, and that there is neither depth nor mystery in divine science for a pure heart and tranquil conscience.

Thus, indeed, you will evangelise your brothers the workers, and make new men of them. Aspire to that rôle which you have commenced by your intelligence, and that you will only complete by high virtue. No virtue without certitude; no certitude without examination and without meditation. Keep your young blood cool, and, without chilling your imagination, direct it towards heaven, its country! The wonders of the earth which excite your curiosity, the distant travels which tempt your inquietude, will teach you nothing of that which

will render you greater. Believe me, who have travelled like the man of whom the poet has said :

*Le chagrin monte en croupe et galope avec lui.*

Grief mounts behind and rides with him.

Good night, my boy ; the morning is dawning. I am going to retire. Embrace Désirée for me, and tell her that she will make me happy by giving to her child the name of one of mine.

Write to me in reply, and above all do not frank your letters, it would vex me. Let me frank mine when I think of it, and do not show them, unless it be to Désirée.

*To M. ALEXANDRE WEILL, Paris.*

PARIS, 4th March, 1844.

SIR,

I have no talent for discussion, and I avoid all dispute, because were I a thousand times right I should always be beaten. Had I not replied to you, I should have feared to be wanting in the affability due towards one's fellow-creatures ; yet I should be very sorry for having written, were you to regard my letter as an attack upon your character and religious convictions. For instance, you believe that I deny your having any *heart*, whereas I have never thought of saying anything of the kind. I have not any right to doubt your heart, particularly after the struggles you have gone through. That is the way with discussions ; importance is attached to words, and each word calls for a commentary. It is my belief that in denying God and

divine love, which is one of the aspects of divinity, you bring a cold critical spirit to the investigation of those lofty truths. I do not say so in order that you should be sparing of affection and charity in your intercourse with mankind. Your heart follows one path and your mind another, whereas the two united would not be too much for seeking the true God, whom I do not attempt to explain, and my conception of whom is not at all such as is attributed to me by you. You fill four pages in preaching a good deal to one who had no need of it to be induced to reject the idolatrous worship of your Jewish Jehovah and of our good God (*bon Dieu*) of Catholicism. But I believe in God, and in a God that is good (*Dieu bon*), and all Germany and France combined could not remove Him from my heart.

I should be greatly grieved if you were to consider our hearts and our doors systematically closed against all that fights in Germany against the common enemy. But if your party are all like *you*; if in your Spinozist ardour you summon us before your tribunal, and ask an account of our work, without leaving us the liberty to conceive it according to our strength and aptitude, pronouncing us to be stupid, hypocritical, and infamous, in not walking along the same paths as you, you are more despotic, more intolerant, and more inquisitorial than Moses and Dominic. Write your books and destroy false Christianity as you think proper. Who is refused the choice of means? But do not persecute individuals, do not provoke quiet people and friends of prudent language; that would be altogether contrary to French *taste*, with which you would do well to temper yourself a little, if you wish people in France to profit by your talent, your studies, and your zeal.

I have written these two letters with good intent, so as not to show a want of deference and politeness, but not to contend at close quarters with your philosophy. If I were a warrior, I should not go to war for the pleasure of striking at random and to gratify a bellicose caprice. The war of ideas requires even greater calmness, and, as I believe, sentiments of religious humility and charity which you supremely despise. We will therefore, if you please, dispute no more.

We are not equally armed. I heed neither compliments nor insults, and I decline to admit the competence of anybody who, except when carried to excess by enthusiasm, undertakes to demonstrate to me by raillery and disdain that he is in possession of the sole truth. At any rate, your confidence in yourself will be quickly modified here, and I do not allow myself any feeling of anxiety as to your future. You have too much intelligence not to recognise that it is necessary to affirm with more benevolence and sympathy, however bold and courageous the affirmation may be.

I have the honour to be your servant,

G.

*To M. CHARLES PONCY, Toulon.*

NOHANT, 12th September, 1844.

It was always my desire that a poet should write under such a title as follows, *Songs of all Trades*, a selection of popular songs, at once jolly, simple, serious, and grand; above all, simple, easy to sing, and whose rhythm could readily be adapted to well-known popular melodies or to new ones easily composed. Or else, and in default of music, the songs should be written so fluently and so simply, that those scarcely able

to read could understand and learn them. To poeticise, to ennoble every kind of labour, at the same time to pity the excess and wrong social direction of such labour, such as it is understood nowadays, would be a grand, useful, and lasting undertaking. It would teach the rich how to respect the working classes, the poor workman how to respect himself.

There are some handicrafts more or less noble in appearance, more or less toilsome in reality. Every one of these would require from the poet searching scrutiny, serious comments, a special treatment at once poetical and philosophical; and, with unity of form, there would in such a subject be infinite variety. I have dreamed about it for the last ten years. Had Béranger made up his mind to do so, he could have written those songs with a masterly hand. It is a subject which I pointed out to several young poets, but they were all afraid to undertake it, because they lacked the requisite inspiration and sympathy.

A proletarian poet should possess them. Poncey himself has grandeur and enthusiasm. But, in order to bend his rather too select and *brilliant* talent to the austere simplicity indispensable for that kind of poetry, he will have to study much, to give up many glittering effects and many coquettish expressions of which he is too fond. Will he be equal to such a great reformation? Yet without such, the work I speak of would be devoid of value, of attraction for the vulgar, and, ought I to say so? of novelty in the eyes of *connoisseurs*; for the question would be as the doing of something as yet unattempted by anybody. That Poncey has already done in his own way (and admirably too), when depicting himself at his trade of mason; but it should be done somewhat more simply, in fact altogether so.



Simplicity is the most difficult thing to secure in this world ; it is the last limit of experience and the last effort of genius. Is not Poncy still too young to give those firm and clear touches which appear so easy that everybody says, "I could have done as much," and which, nevertheless, nobody but a great artist can display ? The postilion, the smith, the washer-woman, the mason, the hawker, the carver, the plumber, the street singer, the embroideress, the florist, the gardener, the sexton, the village fiddler, the carpenter, etc., etc., etc., what an inexhaustible crowd of varied types, all of which the poet could adorn or condole with !

It would be necessary to promote love for all these, even for such as might appear repulsive when first seen, and to inspire a tender pity for those who could not be admired as courageous and useful beings. I myself would sum up the whole thing in a last song, entitled, *The Song of Misery*, which would commence simply thus :

I am Dame Poverty. . . .

(Je suis Dame Misère.)

It would be necessary, in most of these songs, to renounce the Alexandrine metre, and to choose a short and catching rhythm.

Such, my dear boy, are the ideas which I put on paper some time ago, when ill and fatigued. I am still more so to-day, and cannot complete my explanation or make it clearer. You will make up for it by your quick intelligence ; or else my idea will appear to you puerile, and, in that case, do not heed it, for it may be that such idea does not at all agree with your way of thinking and working.

There was a time when my idea as to the *Song of all*

*Trades* was so clear and so lively, that, if I had been able to write poetry, I should have given expression to it under the fire of inspiration. Since then, I have often explained it offhand, and made it clear to persons who did not know how or did not wish to make use of it. Now it is very indistinct, particularly in presence of the fear of indicating to you a way which would not be your own and would lead you astray. And

besides, I am less and less able to express myself in letters. I have so much work besides that I cannot write to my friends, except when illness prevents me from writing on my own account. I thus always write to them very obscurely and with great lack of spirit.

Give Désirée a thousand tender blessings from me, and from my Solange also, for herself and for her Solange. My son is at Paris.

Your poems on *truth* and *reality* seem to me very fine, very touching, and very well written, with one or two exceptions. The idea is well sustained, excepting in two or three strophes, where it is somewhat feeble and vague. But it becomes better again further on, and the end is very fine. Courage!

*To M. XXX. . ., Curé of XXX. . . .*

NOHANT, 13th November, 1844.

REVEREND SIR,

In spite of all the eloquence and cleverness of your circular, in spite of all the flattering expressions contained in the letter with which you honour me, I will answer you frankly, as it is possible to answer a man of quick intelligence.

I should not refuse to assist in a work of charity, even

though it were pointed out to me by the clergy. I may have esteem and personal affection for some of its members, and I do not carry on a systematic war against the body to which you belong. But all that tends to the revival of the Catholic religion will find in me a very peaceable adversary, it is true (by reason of the little vigour of my character and of the little weight attaching to my opinion), but unshakeable in personal conduct. Since the spirit of liberty has been stifled in the Church, since there is no longer in Catholic doctrine either discussions, councils, progress, or light, I regard that doctrine as a dead letter placed as a political check under thrones and above peoples. It is in my eyes a dark veil over the word of Christ—a false interpretation of the sublime gospels, and an insurmountable obstacle to the sacred equality which God promises, which God will grant to men on earth as in heaven.

I will say no more. I am not so proud as to wish to engage in a controversy with you, and for that very reason I shall have little fear of embarrassing or disturbing your faith. I must inform you of the motive for my refusal, and I wish that it may not be imputed by you to any other sentiment than my conviction. On the day when you preach purely and simply the gospel of Saint John and the doctrine of Saint John Chrysostom, without false commentary and without concession to the powers of this world, I will come and hear your sermons, reverend sir, and will bring my offering to your church; but I do not wish for it on your account. On that day you will be interdicted by your bishop and the doors of your chapel will be shut.

Accept, reverend sir, my full apology for the frankness which you have provoked, and the particular expression of my high consideration.

GEORGE SAND.

*To M. LOUIS BLANC, Paris.*

NOHANT, *November, 1844.*

MY DEAR MONSIEUR BLANC,

My lively and profound sympathies for the work of the *Réforme*,\* and for those who have given it a direction at once social and political, do not date from to-day only. I have, perhaps, lacked the *art* to express and the *leisure* to prove that; but certainly neither good intention nor devotion.

The very flattering letter which you have been good enough to write me contains two points. You appeal to my literary collaboration; in point of will that is assured to the *Réforme* as far as the real and inevitable necessities of my life will permit me to devote my time to it. There is also a more pressing appeal to my confidence and my zeal. I reply frankly: I esteem you too much to be polite only; I have conviction enough to risk seeing the breaking of a bond which my heart would, nevertheless, still be most happy to preserve.

I need not tell you that the political probity and the personal generosity of you all are demonstrated to me as clearly as the same feelings in my own conscience. I need not add that I recognise your talents, and wish that I possessed them for my own satisfaction and in order to express my beliefs. Yet, in spite of all this, I am not yet quite sure that my collaboration, even purely literary, would meet your requirements, without previous investigation by you. Wait, therefore, a little before inducing me to promise it; for I am only too ready to bind myself.

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\* The name of a newspaper edited by Louis Blanc.

The *Éclaireur*\* is now publishing a series of poor reflections,† which occurred to me some time ago, after a conversation with a politician, M. Garnier-Pagès, a man who appeared to me excellent, and from whom I could not part without heartily shaking hands, although our views were entirely different. I intended that those reflections should grow mouldy with many more at the bottom of my desk. My friends of the *Éclaireur*, whom I told that M. Garnier-Pagès had thoroughly demolished my arguments, but that I had drafted a reply to his arguments after he had left, desired to read and publish my reply, which is addressed to them as well as to him. I only altered a few words in it. That production possesses hardly any merit, and I *do not advise you to read it*; but if you wish to acquaint yourself with the state of my mind, you must nevertheless be patient enough to peruse article number three. The latter is the full expression of my mental capabilities, and I fear that you will find my political education very incomplete, and my religious curiosity rather indiscreet. It would not displease me to be better indoctrinated. I am not obstinate for the sole sake of being so, and, if you will tell me what is behind the words *Socialism, philosophy, and religion*, which the *Réforme* often employs, I will frankly tell you whether it thoroughly or but partially enlists my sympathies.

I do not ask you for a dogma or for a treatise on metaphysics. I might, perhaps, understand it no better than my mother, a daughter of the people, understood the compli-

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\* The name of a periodical to which G. Sand contributed.

† Articles on politics and Socialism (*articles sur la Politique et le Socialisme*).

mentary political speech which she delivered to Bailly\* and Lafayette at the Hôtel de Ville, when presenting them with crowns on behalf of her district;† but I will put two or three very silly questions to you, and, if you do not laugh too much at them, you may rely upon what little I can do. I am too old to be carried away solely by the splendour of genius, courage, and fame; but I am still a woman in mind, that is to say, I must have faith in order to have courage.

I think your appeal for petitions is excellent, and I will promote it here with all my heart, by urging on my lazy friends. If I can do anything else let me know.

Do not tell those gentlemen how absurd I am in my reply: thank them for me, and tell them how anxious I am to do what they ask of me. I am impatiently waiting for the last volume of your history,‡ which your forgetful brother had promised to send. I am reading an admirable fragment in the *Éclaireur*. The young man whose pranks you ably relate, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, has sent me a pamphlet of his own, which completes your portrait of him. Nobody can depict like you. You must give us a history of the Empire or, what I should prefer, a history of the Revolution. The latter has never yet been written, any more than that of Jesus Christ.

I shall be in Paris a fortnight hence, when I shall expect you to talk to me about the *Réforme* and politics.

Yours cordially.

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\* Mayor of Paris in 1789, beheaded during the Reign of Terror.

† At the time of the breaking out of the Revolution the divisions of Paris were called districts.

‡ *Histoire de Dix Ans.*

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*To PRINCE LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, The Fortress,  
Ham.*

PARIS, December, 1844.

PRINCE,

I must thank you for the flattering recollection that you have preserved of me, as shown by your forwarding to me your remarkable work on the extinction of pauperism.\* It is with all my heart that I here express to you the serious interest with which I have studied your project. I am not clever enough to appreciate the feasibility of its realisation, and, besides, it involves points of controversy which, I am sure, if necessary you would readily relinquish. In all that relates to the application of theories, we must really take a part in the work in order to know whether we are deceived, and it is the part of a noble intellect to perfect its plans whilst carrying them into execution.

But that execution, in whose hands, Prince, will the future place it? As regards ourselves, democratic souls, we should have preferred being conquered by you rather than by anybody else; but we should, none the less, have been conquered . . . others might say saved! I do not know whether your defeat has secured you flatterers, all I know is, that it ought to bring you friends. Believe me, Prince, generous souls require more courage to tell you the truth now than they would have required to do so had you triumphed. It is our custom to brave the mighty, and that does not cost us so much, whatever the danger it may involve.

But in the presence of a captive warrior and a disarmed hero, we are not brave. You ought, therefore, to feel indebted

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\* *L'Extinction du Paupérisme.*

*Letters of George Sand.*

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I am refusing to yield to the seductions to which your character, your intelligence, and your situation expose us, for I am going to tell you that we shall never acknowledge any sovereignty but that of the people. That sovereignty appears to us to be incompatible with the rule of one man; no miracle, no personification of popular genius in a man will ever prove to us the right of *one* man. But you now know that, perhaps you were already aware of it when you were coming over to our side.

What you doubtless did not know is, that men are diffident, and that the purity of your intentions would have been fatally misunderstood. You could not have sat in our midst without having to fight with us and overcome us. Such is the drift of the providential laws which urge on France to her destiny that you, one of the *élite* (*homme d'élite*), were not appointed to deliver us from the hand of a man, a vulgar man, to say no worse.

Alas! that thought must grieve you as much as it does us to conceive and to express it; for you deserve to have been born in times when your rare qualities might have ensured our happiness and your own glory.

But there exists another glory besides that achieved by the sword, another power besides that of command. You feel it now that misfortune has restored to you all your natural grandeur, and that you aspire, so people say, to be but a French citizen.

That part is a sufficiently lofty one for him who is capable of understanding it. Your preoccupations and writings prove that we should have in you a great citizen if the resentment engendered by the struggle could vanish, and if liberty some day were to come and heal the umbrageous diffidence of



man. You perceive how fierce and implacable still are the laws of war; you who courageously confronted them, and now submit to them more courageously still. They appear to us more odious than ever when we see a man like yourself the victim of them. The terrible and magnificent name that you bear would therefore not have seduced us. We have at once diminished and grown since the days of sublime intoxication which *He* gave us: his illustrious reign is no longer of this world, and the heir to his name occupies himself with the fate of the proletariat!

Yes, that is exactly where your grandeur lies, there is the element of your active soul. It is a wholesome food, and will not corrupt the freshness and justness of your thoughts, as might have been the case, perhaps, in spite of yourself, with the exercise of power. *There* should be the link between you and the Republican hearts which France counts by millions.

As for myself, I am unacquainted with suspicion, and if it depended upon me, having read your works I should trust in your promises, open the prison doors to set you free, and my hand to grasp your own.

But, alas! do not delude yourself! Those around me, who dream of better days, are all anxious and gloomy. You will only vanquish them by thought, virtue, democratic sentiment, and the doctrine of equality. Your leisure time is sad, but you know how to spend it to advantage.

Do, therefore, noble captive, speak again to us of liberty. Like you, the people are in fetters. The Napoleon of to-day personifies the grief of the people as the *other* personified their glory.

## *Letters of George Sand.*

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*To M. MARLIANI, SENATOR, Madrid.*

PARIS, May, 1846.

DEAR MANOEL,

Though translated into French and read by the fire-side, your speech is still *your fine* and truly excellent. I do not, therefore, wonder at the effect which it produced on the Senate. Possessed of such great presence of mind, of such great knowledge of *the world*, of such great memory and skill, you must provide your statesmen in Spain with a good fund of information, and they are sensible of it. Besides, there is in you great power, which you develop more and more. It is a fund of principles and convictions logically accepted, upon which rests that talent of the moment which, at the end of your speech, you characterise by the word *opportunity*.

Most men are possessed of either one or the other; you possess both, that is a great addition to your strength. You feel keenly in the depths of your soul that political ideal which is not pure poetry, whatever people may say, since it is simply an anticipatory view of what will be, by means of the warm and lucid sentiment of what ought to be. You are penetrated by that ideal and that *poetry* when you make a perfect distinction between the policy and diplomacy which are suitable to nations, and the policy and diplomacy practised by dynastic kings.

I for a long time awaited the manifestation in the parliamentary world of this so very true idea, which, nevertheless, had never before been hatched in any European legislature. Had I been instructed to write in our *Revue*

an article on Spain and the impertinent attack of M. Narcisse Salvandy, I should not have expressed myself otherwise than you did, and perhaps might have used exactly the same terms, although no previous understanding existed between us. You have been courageous and truly confined yourself to the great social policy when uttering such things in a national assembly. Had France been less bent, less painfully struggling beneath her momentary troubles, the whole Liberal press would have held up your speech as a model. But it will take it up again later on, I feel assured, and, in our national assemblies, a few years hence, your work will be quoted, as those of Vattel and Martens were by you. You also spoke about the revolution of '89 with much truth and great courage; continue, therefore, and believe that the future belongs to France and Spain, to France and Spain the one *by* the other, the one *for* the other, and *both* for the whole world.

You reproach me with hating England *à la Française*. No, it is not from the French standpoint that I hate her; for I believe in her future and have trust in her people.

I see Chartism breaking out in England; that is a phase similar to our own, and I doubt not that that country is the arm, as we, Spaniards and Frenchmen, shall be the head and heart of the world of which I dream and which I await.

But ascribe to my hatred for England what you mention respecting "the policy of personal interest with the European Cabinets;" I hate her present action over the world; I think it unjust, iniquitous, demoralising, perfidious, and brutal; but am I not aware that the victims of her dreadful system are in a majority, as are the victims of the middle-party (*juste milieu*) with us?

I do not hate the English nation ; but I hate English society. In like manner I did not hate Spain while passing through its territory, but I cursed the influence of Christine and Don Carlos, which momentarily lessened and lowered the Spanish character. Now Spain has a great destiny before her. Will she enter upon it with a leap ? will she still have the weakness and delirium of the sick ? What does it matter ? none of her good deeds of to-day will be lost, and you have no cause to despair. Promote fraternity, pray that the Regent may display an arm of iron towards conspirators. The insults of the French Cabinet are not so harmful. They will induce the Duke of Victory\* to feel that his mission is a great struggle, and that safety lies in his own pride as also in his perseverance.

When writing to you a short time ago, I did not pretend that **he should, for the present and all at once, upset the phantom of royalty.** I expressed myself badly if you understood me to say so ; but I meant, I still maintain that, if Providence preserves his life, strength, and popularity, that is his mission. He will be driven to it some day, if he should remain himself, and if the storm does not sweep off his work of to-day before it has taken root. Let us hope ! I myself still have hope for France, just now so ill and so lowered ! It would be doubting of God Himself were I to doubt of our ever waking up and being healed.

Good night, dear friend. Proceed with your labours and speak often. Till and sow, *sow and consecrate* (*semez et consacrez*), as says Faust. I do not tell you anything of my

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\* Espartero.

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friendship for you ; you know all about it. My Charlotte\* and yourself are but one for me, and a great part of my life is *in your unity*, as Leroux might say.

Yours,

GEORGE SAND.

*To JOSEPH MAZZINI, London.*

NOHANT, 22nd May, 1847.

FRIEND AND BROTHER,

I received but a fortnight ago the number of the *People's Journal* which contains two articles relating to me. Please to thank Miss Jewsbury, the writer of the first article, for her kindness to me, and allow me to tell you that your article has aroused in me a feeling of delight. That is indeed because it proceeds from your heart.

Other eminent men have deigned to praise or defend me. Unlike yours, their voices did not proceed from the heart, for, generally speaking, men of intellect have but little heart, and I feel no relationship with them. My gratitude for them was, therefore, but a form of necessary politeness ; whereas, you I do not thank. I feel that you say what you think of me because you understand the sufferings of my soul, its requirements, its aspirations, and the sincerity of my will. No, friend, I do not thank you for a *favourable* article, as the saying is ; but I thank you for loving me and calling me your sister and friend. There is a providential fatality and, as it were, an instinct of secret divination in hearts.

Ten years ago I was in Switzerland ; you were concealed there, and mere chance caused me to discover your retreat.

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\* The christian name of Senator Marliani's wife.

## *Letters of George Sand.*

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He m... g I had almost started to call on you. I was still in the stormy period of life. I retraced my steps, saying to myself, you, with your own burden, had enough to carry, and that you did not want the acquaintance of a soul agitated as mine was then. I fully expected that we should meet some day, provided I could resist the temptation of suicide which was haunting me as I gazed upon those *glaciers*. Manfred's dizziness is so thoroughly human! But there are still, in life, rewards attached to the fulfilment of our duties, compensations for the hardships, since your friendship crowns my old age and consoles me for the past.

Come then to France, come to see me in my *black valley*, which is so stupid, yet so good. There I am myself much more than at Paris, where I am always ill, physically and morally. We have many things to tell each other; as for me, I have one to ask you. **There are counsels which I need, but which, for a long time, I have not dared to ask from anybody; there are solutions which I have left in reserve, in order to seek for them in you. Last winter, you said you would come; are you unable, or do you no longer wish to do so?**

But for some important domestic events, which even deprived me of my hours of sleep, I should have written to you. I have just married my daughter, and that satisfactorily too, I believe, to an artist of powerful inspiration and will. My sole ambition for the dear creature 'twas that she should love and be loved; my wish is fulfilled. The future is in the hands of God, but I trust in the duration of that love and union.

I respect and love you.

Your sister,

GEORGE SAND.

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*To M. THÉOPHILE THORÉ, Paris.*

NOHANT, June, 1847.

I should have the greatest desire, sir, to be useful to the person whom you recommend to me, and his being the nephew of Saint-Just does not constitute a mean title in my eyes. But what that person asks for is nearly impossible.

Ask yourself. M. Flaubert \* desires me to promise him and to allow him to announce a preface from my pen, for the first edition of a book which is still but projected, whose first page is not even written, and whose plan he is submitting to me. The plan appears to me to be good and useful; but that is not sufficient to induce me to engage myself. Nobody can *endorse* the spirit of a book before having attentively read it.

Besides, I have written three or four prefaces in my life, and I believe that I could not write a fifth. That is a kind of work for which I am not suited, and which gives me more trouble than three novels. In fine, and that is the most irrefutable argument, a preface, by no matter whom, never did any good to anybody. If the book be good, what is the use of a preface? If the former be bad, the latter injures it all the more.

Accept, sir, the assurance of my affectionate regard.

GEORGE SAND.

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\* Gustave Flaubert.

*To JOSEPH MAZZINI, London.*

NOHANT, 28th July, 1847.

FRIEND AND BROTHER,

Will this year, 1847, the most troubled and painful perhaps of all my life, in many respects, bring me at least the consolation of seeing and knowing you? I dare not believe it, having been so much haunted by bad luck; yet, you promise it, and we are nearing the appointed time. In a few days we shall have a railroad from Paris to Châteauroux, which latter place is only nine leagues distant from my residence. You will thus not require me to give you a little itinerary in order to avoid the delays and drawbacks of a journey, one of the thousand little plagues of our poor France, which otherwise is afflicted with such big ones. You will come from Paris to Châteauroux in six or seven hours; and, from Châteauroux to Nohant, the coach takes three hours along the highway.

How kind your letter is, and how fond and sincere your heart! I am certain that you will do me much good and will cheer up my courage, which has lately been subjected to many attacks, concerning private matters. And yet, what are private matters! I should say that, especially of late years, I experience great difficulty in preserving, I will not say my belief—a faith conquered at the expense of what it cost us cannot be lost—but my serenity of mind. But the latter is precisely a duty imposed upon souls which believe. It is like a testimony that they owe to their religion. Yet, we cannot reduce ourselves to pure abstractions, and the confident expectation of a better life, the love of an immortal ideal does not destroy in us the sentiment and grief of present life.



That life, in the times we live in, is dreadful. Corruption and impudence are on one side; folly and weakness on the other. All souls are sick, all brains are disturbed, and the soundest are still the most unfortunate, for they see, they understand, and suffer.

We must, however, traverse all this in order to reach God, and every man must undergo in detail what is undergone by the whole of mankind. You, who have been tried by all sorts of martyrdoms, come take me by the hand. Although you might only tell me what I know, methinks I should be fortified and sanctified by that antique formula which consecrates friendship between men.

I received one of your pamphlets, but not the letter addressed to Carlo-Alberto, unless you sent it afterwards, and it be in Paris. The translations also reached me. Please give my thanks to the author.

The word *traine* is local and not current French. A *traine* is a narrow and well-shaded path through a wood. It is as we might say a *sentier*. But our Berry dialect, which is in fact old French, makes a distinction between a *path* which only affords room for a foot passenger and one where a cart can pass. The first is called *traque* or *traquette*, the second *traine*. The word sounds pretty in French, and is understood or guessed even in Paris, where the people speak the most ugly and most incorrect language in France, because that language is merely fanciful, made up by chance and rapid successive creations, whereas the provinces preserve the tradition of the original tongue and create but few new words. I feel much respect and affection for the language of the peasantry; in my estimation it is the more correct.

*To M. CHARLES PONCY, Toulon.*

NORMAN, 14th December, 1847.

I am much in arrears with you, my dear boy, and I do not know to which of your letters I should first reply. You excuse my silence, I quite perceive, since you still write to me, and your tender affection seems to increase with it and with my despondency. You and Désirée, whose souls are delicate because they are ardent, have understood that I was passing through the gravest and most grievous phase in my life. I nearly succumbed, although I had long foreseen it. But you know that a sinister prevision, however evident it may be, does not always bear heavily upon us. There are days, weeks, even whole months, when we are under illusions, and when we flatter ourselves that we can ward off the blow that threatens us. Thus the most likely misfortunes always take us unarmed and unawares. To this manifestation of the unfortunate germs which were silently growing, were added divers very bitter and quite unexpected accessory circumstances. Indeed, my soul and body have both been grievously afflicted. I believe my grief to be incurable; for the more I succeed in distracting myself at certain times, the more it returns to me dark and poignant in the hours that follow. Nevertheless, I fight against it unremittingly, and if I do not hope for a victory that would consist in banishing it entirely, at least I obtain that which consists in supporting life, in being scarcely any longer ill, in recovering the taste for work and in not appearing troubled. I have recovered calmness and outward gaiety, so necessary for the sake of others, and all seems to go well with me.

Maurice has recovered his confidence and calmness, and is engaged with Borie on an *attractive work*. Borie transcribes Rabelais' style literally in modern spelling, thus rendering it less difficult to read. Besides, he purges it of all obscenity, of all coarseness, and of a certain prolixity which renders it unreadable or wearisome. These blemishes removed, four-fifths of the work remain intact, irreproachable and admirable; for it is one of the finest monuments of human intelligence, and Rabelais, much more so than Montaigne, was the great emancipator of French intellect at the time of the *Renaissance*. I do not remember whether you have read him. If not, wait for our expurgated edition, for I believe that the *dirty* text would cause the book to fall from your hands. Those dirty expressions were the jokes of his time, but ours, thank God, no longer tolerates such beastliness. The result is that a work of lofty philosophy, lofty poetry, lofty reason, and of great truth has become the amusement of certain learned or debauched men, who admire it for its talent, or enjoy it for its cynicism, the greater number without understanding its purport, its serious instruction, and infinite beauty. Twenty years ago I thought, when winking at his obscenities whilst reading him unceasingly, that I would expurgate Rabelais, always feeling tempted to address him thus: "O divine master, what a beast you are!" Maurice in thought performed the same work. Thoroughly conversant with that old style of language to which our Berrichon idiom gives us the key more than to any learned commentators, he thoroughly relished Rabelais, and had made (and I believe you have seen it) a series of illustrations, drawn in a barbarous style in his youth, but full of fire, originality, and invention, and at least perfectly chaste, like the sentiment which caused him to adore the

grave, artistic, and profound side of his author. Time only was wanting to me to realise my desire. Borie found that his time was free for several months, and I have persuaded him to carry out the work. He gets on wonderfully; I revise, and the expurgation is made with extreme care, so as to remove all that is *ugly* and to preserve all that is *comely*. Maurice, who now draws very well, resumes his youthful compositions, invents new ones, and is making fifty designs on wood, which will be engraved and inserted in the text. It will form an *édition de luxe*, and, as such publications are very costly, we shall probably not get much profit out of it. But it will serve to show up the artist and the expurgator. Besides, we shall, I believe, have rendered a great service to truth and art, in placing in the hands of virtuous women and pure-minded people a masterpiece which, with good reason, has been hitherto forbidden them. I will attach my name as a third party to this publication, to aid the success of my young people, and I will provide the work with a preliminary essay. Let us keep it secret, for it is still one until the day when advertised, for we may be forestalled in this sort of thing by *clever people* who spoil everything.\* The winter, as regards Maurice and Borie, will thus be well occupied here with me. As regards my dear Augustine, she has won the heart of an honest young fellow, who is quite worthy of her, and is possessed of some means. The latter, combined with a little assistance from me, will give her an independency, and, as regards the essential qualities of intelligence and character, she could not have met with better. She will not be able to marry for

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\* This work, three parts completed, was not published, owing to the revolution of 1848.

three months yet. She will then go to live in Limousin with her husband, and will come to spend her holidays with me. We shall miss each other during three parts of the year; but, any way, I hope that she will be happy, and that I shall be able to die free from anxiety on her account.

I myself have undertaken a rather heavy work, entitled *Histoire de ma Vie*. It is a series of reminiscences, professions of faith, and meditations in a form whose details will show a little poetry and much simplicity. I shall not, however, reveal all my life. I do not admire the pride and cynicism of confessions, and I do not see that we ought to disclose all the mysteries of our hearts to men more wicked than ourselves, and consequently disposed to find in them a bad lesson instead of a good one. Besides, our lives are a part of all that surrounds us, and we can never justify ourselves in anything without being forced to accuse somebody, sometimes our best friend. But I do not wish to accuse or to grieve anybody. That would be odious to me and would hurt me more than my victims. I thus believe that I shall make a useful book, free from danger and scandal, from vanity as from baseness, and I am finding pleasure in writing it. Besides, it will be a rather good thing, which will put me on my legs again, and remove a part of my anxiety as to the future of Solange, which is by no means assured.

You have sent me a charming epistle in verse, for which I have not thanked you. You must preserve it; for, with the suppression of a few lines which only apply to me, the effusion might be placed in a future collection of your writings. Did I not tell you long ago that I considered your *grasshopper* (*cigale*) and your *Ant* (*fourmi*) delightful in their way? With regard to this, and without wishing my contradiction to affect

your own views in the least, I wish to tell you that you are wrong as to the sense of La Fontaine's fables. His thought was exactly yours, and your commentary in rhymed fable develops without changing it. Where, my boy, did you get the idea, that he commends the greedy ant? No, no, in none of his adorable fables does he preach egotism. His moral is beautiful like his style, pure like his heart, and I wish that poor Lachambaudie had a sentiment of the truth and humanity which inspired him so well.

The ant is not a lender,  
That is the least of its faults,

(La fourmi n'est pas prêteuse,  
C'est là son moindre défaut,)

says quite as much as :

The ant that is devout and loves not actors.  
(La fourmi qu'est dévote et n'aim pas les acteurs.)

This way of twitting the poor singer is a kind of two-edged raillery, and it is really the keen edge of the blade that strikes egotism. It is Fontaine's way of teaching, and the true form of irony at all times. You will find it quite differently employed by Rabelais. He pretends to admire and extol all that he blames and despises, and, if the reader is deceived, it is his own fault; he mistakes the joke and is deficient in intelligence. From all time, and above all in times when truth has had need of a veil in order to spread itself, irony has proceeded in that way. It is for us to explain to our children how they are to understand the moral hidden under these subtleties. So natural and instructive is this style that you yourself indulge in it in your parody!

In our days we dot the *i* a little more distinctly. That is

no credit to us, since there is no Bastille for courageous thoughts; and do not imagine that *art* fails to gain greatly in having its elbows free; for it is a great art indeed to divine that which cannot be outspoken.

I so rarely see Leroux, and for such a short time, that I have not in fact said much to him about you; but as to his pretended ignorance of your having written songs, remember, my boy, that you sang two or three to him here, and that he rather wearied you with his theories, good in themselves, but not applicable in my opinion in your case. You see that he is much distracted and that he has quite forgotten that. He is an admirable genius in ideal life, but in real life always clumsy.

You ask me for a subject for a poem. The devil! you want something now! I have thought a good deal but fear that I have not found one to your liking. That is rather serious. However, let us see. Why not write either in verse or prose, the *History of Toulon*? the true history, warm and breathing, of the *people* of your native town. France is ignorant of the history of all its component parts. The districts are themselves ignorant of their own history. And yet from an historical standpoint all appears young again. History is in fashion to-day. People read nothing else. I will not say any more. I fear that I may influence your individual inspiration in pointing out to you a form, or plan, or any opinion whatever. But see if the rough idea pleases you. You have written the *History of a Paving Stone* (*Histoire d'un Pavé*). Your real paving stone is the people, rough, solid, drawn from the very bowels of the earth, put to vile uses, crushed under foot, yet destined nevertheless to crush the heads of the hydra. Toulon has witnessed some great deeds. The good and bad actions

of its people, its grand inspirations, its baneful errors, all could be related in ardent language and commented upon with the striking precision of poetry, as alternately a teaching, encouragement or redress. The people there, moreover, possess a characteristic physiognomy, and it rests with you to depict it. Perhaps the subject will carry you beyond the thousand lines contemplated. There will not be any harm in that, and even, should your verses be at the same time very clear and fluent, it will be so much the better. In these times men look anxiously at the past, like a *wrestler* who measures the distance between himself and his opponent before springing forward to seize him. Consider this! if it does not meet your views I will endeavour to find something else.

Good night, my boy. This is a long letter. But now the fine weather we are having revives us, and will inspire you better than I. It is warm even here, and I believe that under your beautiful sky you will not feel at all amiss. You are always meeting with accidents, and that distresses me. Were I *Désirée* I should scold you; for I believe it is our state of distraction that often leads to casualties. I am waiting for the spring with impatience, in order that I may verbally give you the finest lectures.

I am not thinking of going to Paris; but, in three months' time, I must go to Limousin, to instal Augustine in her new home. But, once for all, I will not henceforth stop you at the moment of your departure; for we are to be blamed for all this delay, I above all, on account of my excessive solicitude. We ought to consider that mishaps are sometimes unavoidable in life, and that, even though you might not meet me here, as it is certain that I must return after very short



periods of absence, it is better that you should wait for me at Nohant for a few days rather than miss spending months together. Methinks that this is a logical conclusion. I allowed myself to be too much impressed by the idea that you might be quite upset at finding the house empty, and Désirée quite weary of waiting for me. Had I let you come, we should soon have found ourselves in one another's society, and should have spent the summer together. It is true that you would have been for some time the guests of a sorrowing family. But, indeed, when shall we be ensured against grief? Against such disasters *society* is of no avail.

Besides, I hope that my affairs are going to improve, and that you will no longer need to be anxious about expenses.

Good night, once more, my three dear children. I kiss as I love you, the children here joining me in love.

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